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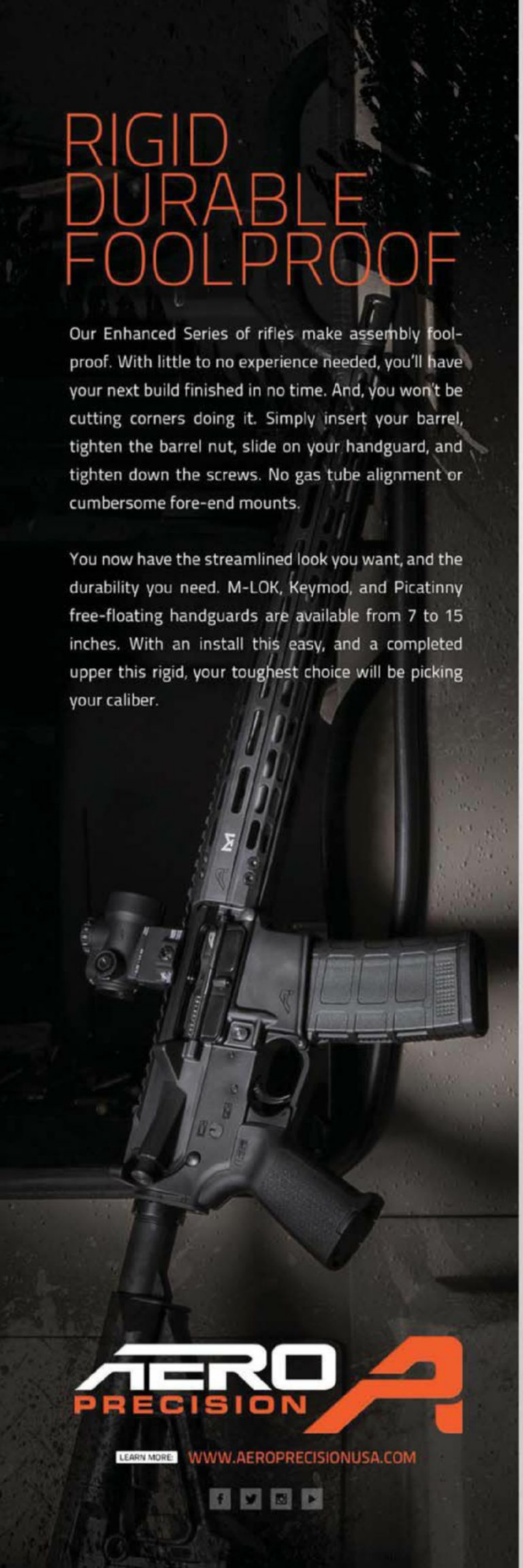
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STEP 3 Slide handguard onto receiver and tighten 8 torx screws.

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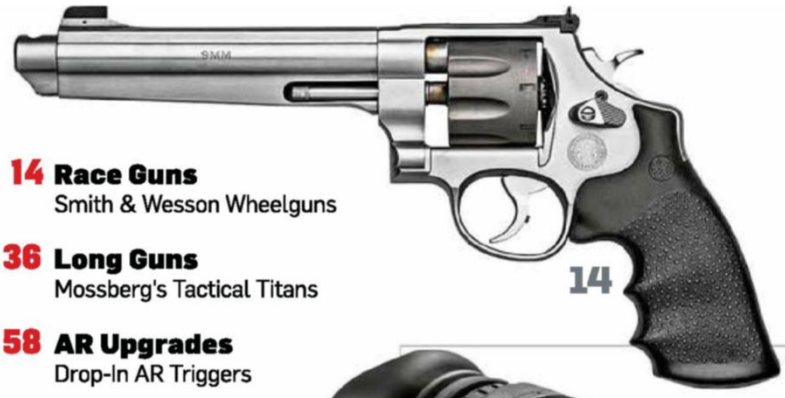
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TROY M7A1 PDW



Ultra-compact 5.56mm delivers CQB power in an amazingly small package!

STORY & PHOTOS BY SEAN UTLEY

Compact weapons continue to come into their own. Designs are being pushed further and further, bringing us smaller weapons that yield excellent accuracy and provide excellent reliability. There's always been discussion about the AR in short form and whether or not it's reliable, accurate or truly effective. It's pretty safe to say that we can move past trivial discussions of those sorts.

Many companies have made shorter weapons by simply putting a shorter barrel and gas system on a receiver, which is relatively simple. Troy did the same with its first version of the M7A1 roughly four years ago. It was a small package that came with a Storm case so that you could break it down for transport. However, Troy didn't just settle for that and instead pushed to take the M7A1 to a new yet smaller level by creating a viable extendable/retractable stock for the AR's lower receiver.



For the ultimate in CQB firepower, look no further than the Troy M7A1 PDW, a 5.56mm AR that collapses down to only 21 inches. Shown with an EOTech HWS.



Troy's M7A1 PDW uses an innovative buffer/bolt carrier system and a collapsible stock that rides on rails running alongside the receiver on both sides.

SPECS

TROY M7A1 PDW	
Caliber:	5.56mm NATO
Barrel:	7.5 inches
OA Length:	21-25.75 inches
Weight:	5.8 pounds (empty)
Stock:	Collapsible
Sights:	Folding BattleSights
Action:	Semi-auto
Finish:	Matte black
Capacity:	30+1
MSRP:	$1,649

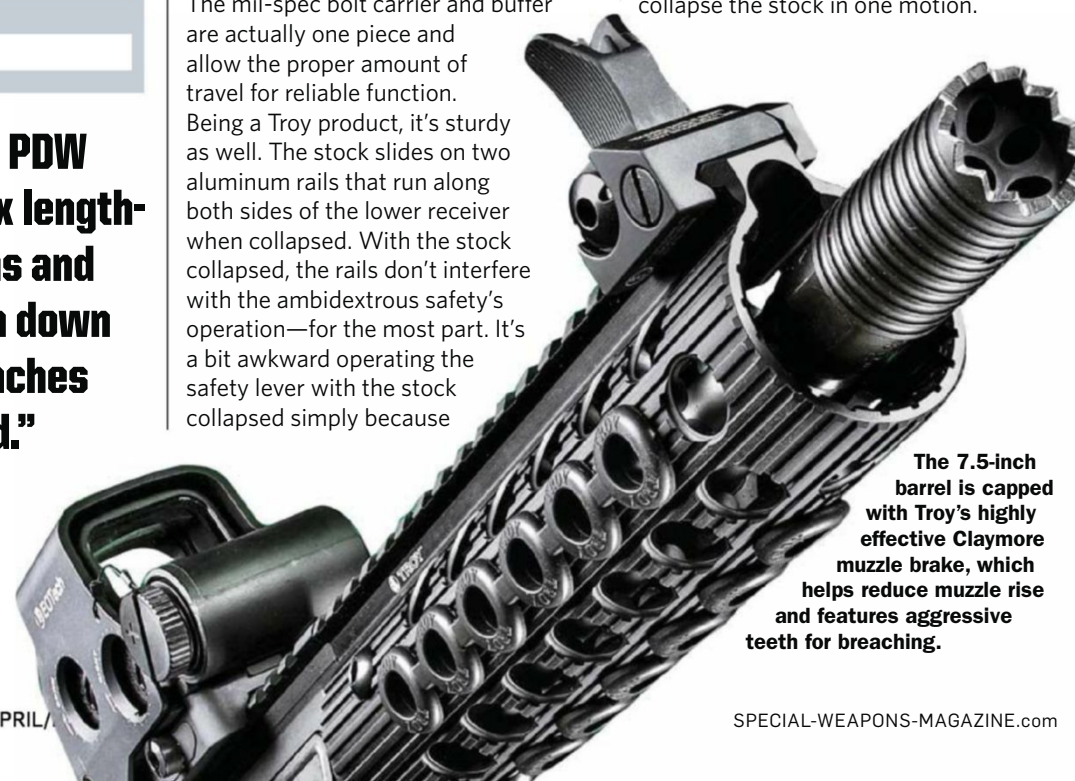
"The The M7A1 PDW stock offers six length-of-pull positions and shrinks the gun down to an even 21 inches when collapsed."

Stock Options

A typical review of a weapon might start with highlighting the barrel. While that is obviously extremely important, the most innovative and notable feature on the M7A1 is without a doubt the stock. Functionality aside, extendable/retractable stocks such as this definitely look awesome but historically only appeared on ultra-compact weapons like the HK MP5. The challenge with having such a stock on an AR has always been the buffer tube system and how to shorten it correctly without interfering with its function. Troy addressed this by creating a proprietary bolt carrier that has a buffer attached at the rear of the carrier as well as a redesigned spring.

The retractable stock is made of aluminum and is quite sturdy. It's a complete system that replaces the entire standard buffer tube assembly. The mil-spec bolt carrier and buffer are actually one piece and allow the proper amount of travel for reliable function. Being a Troy product, it's sturdy as well. The stock slides on two aluminum rails that run along both sides of the lower receiver when collapsed. With the stock collapsed, the rails don't interfere with the ambidextrous safety's operation—for the most part. It's a bit awkward operating the safety lever with the stock collapsed simply because the amount of space above the lever is decreased slightly. A little practice operating the safety is necessary to get fully acclimated to it.

The addition of this PDW stock creates a very compact package. Troy's literature points out that the PDW stock is 3 inches shorter than the traditional carbine stock. This statement doesn't do it justice. The M7A1 PDW stock offers six length-of-pull positions and shrinks the gun down to an even 21 inches when collapsed. Compact dimensions like these make for a weapon that is easy to maneuver in and out of vehicles and keep things closer during CQB work. The stock is easily adjusted by pushing a latch that resides on its underside just behind the rear of the receiver. Operating the latch is simple and straightforward. Press the latch once to move the stock in either direction, with it locking into each adjustment point. If you hold the lever down, you can completely extend or collapse the stock in one motion.



The 7.5-inch barrel is capped with Troy's highly effective Claymore muzzle brake, which helps reduce muzzle rise and features aggressive teeth for breaching.



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"It's a small gun with big performance, and the timing is right for such a product."



1



2



3

1. The forged lower receiver features an ambidextrous safety for easy right- or left-handed operation.

2. Troy's Battle Ax Control Grip features a steeper angle than a typical unit as well as a storage compartment.

3. The buttplate is aggressively textured to ensure the stock locks solidly against a shooter's shoulder.

Total Package

The M7A1 is Troy from muzzle to buttstock. The forged upper and lower are mated together and support a 7.5-inch, stainless steel barrel with a 1-in-7-inch twist rate. Short barrels mean big noise and blast, and Troy equips the M7A1 with its Claymore muzzle brake. The Claymore is designed to direct muzzle blast forward and away from the shooter while also helping to reduce muzzle rise like a typical brake. The Claymore is constructed of heat-treated steel and features short spikes machined into its front. According to Troy, it can be used as a breaching device if needed. I didn't note any significant concussion while shooting the Troy M7A1 PDW at the range, even while prone.

The handguard is Troy's 7.2-inch Alpha BattleRail. The Alpha is made of aluminum and stainless steel components. As you might expect, it features a Picatinny rail along the top with markings so that you can return accessories to their rightful place. The Alpha has large circles cut into it, and Troy claims it disperses heat better than other handguards close to the barrel. It has its own proprietary attachment system for attaching accessories, and long and short Picatinny rail sections are available for the attachment of lights or other accessories. Troy also includes its Squid Grip grip panels. They're different looking but provide excellent grip.

As you might expect, the backup sights are Troy's outstanding folding BattleSights. These sights are easy to use and durable. I have several pairs on various other guns and typically only think of the Troy sights when I need a set of BUIS. The sights co-witnessed in the lower third of the EOTech holographic sight I attached for testing.

The lower receiver features an ambidextrous safety and Troy's Battle Ax Control Grip. It has a straighter angle and keeps the shooter's hand positioning closer to that of a 1911 pistol. It's comfortable and easy to hold, but I still prefer grips with a steeper angle. The grip combines with Troy's oversized triggerguard and makes operation while wearing gloves easier.

PERFORMANCE

TROY M7A1 PDW

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
Black Hills 77 SMK	2,053	1.80
Gorilla 77 SMK	1,817	1.70
Hornady 68 BTHP	1,994	2.30

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in fps by chronograph, and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 100 yards.

Shooting Session

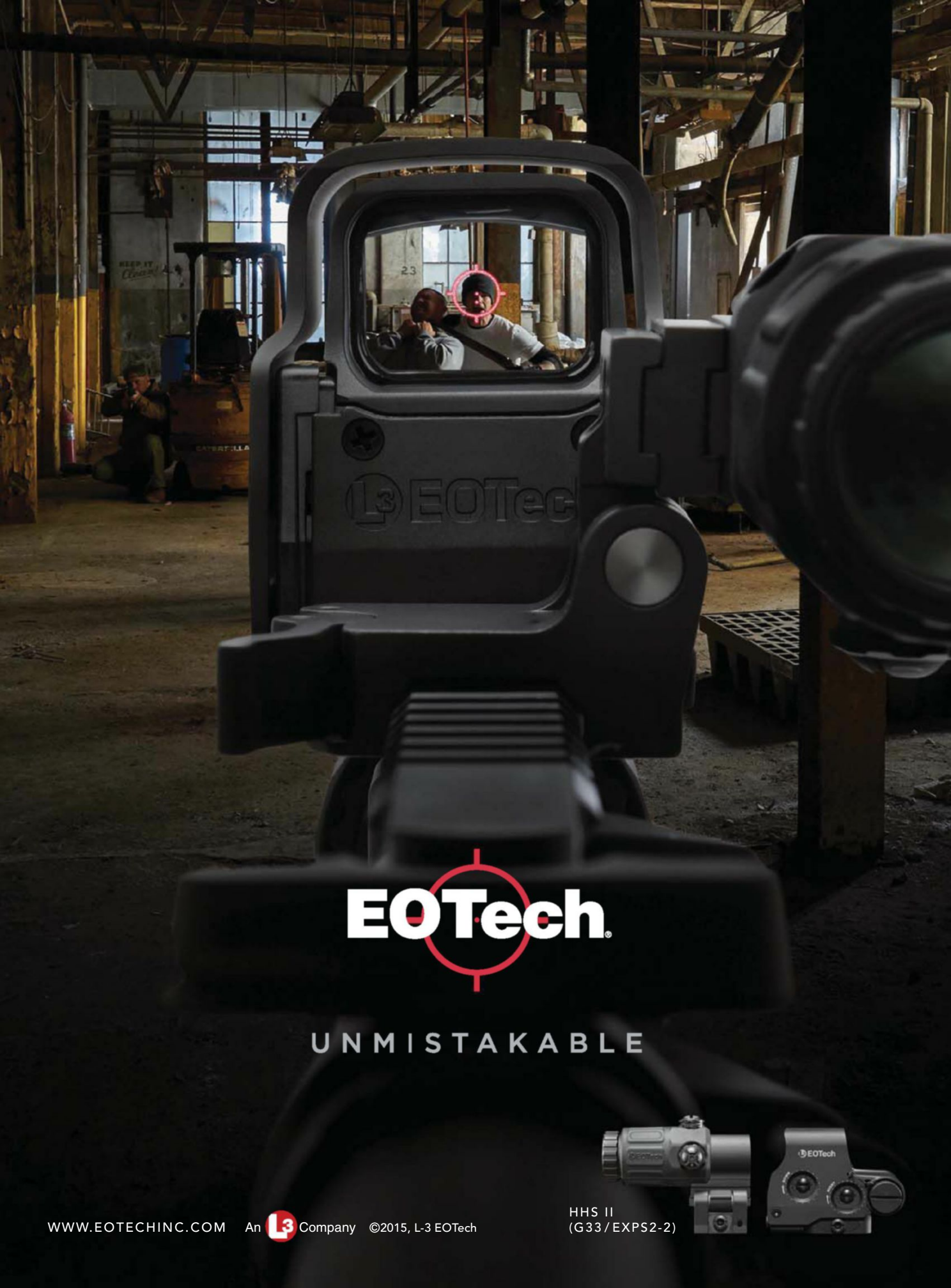
There were no surprises when shooting the Troy M7A1 PDW. I had already experienced the PDW stock on a personal build, and similarly, the Troy-built gun ran like a top. The gun felt good with very smooth operation and soft recoil. With the Geissele trigger, cracking off several consecutive rounds was a cinch and only bettered the characteristics of the M7A1.

The short length of the stock might take some getting used to, though. I find that my nose is positioned right up against the side of the charging handle on the PDW. Many consider this the proper positioning anyway. To me it's just a little too deep, but it's simple enough to get used to. If you're wearing a vest or plate carrier, you'll find that the M7A1 fits nicely and works well in this scenario because the gun is never too long.

The only challenge I found with the Troy PDW stock was during accuracy testing in the prone position. It was not designed for this type of shooting, so it's not a negative. It just didn't make for the best accuracy-testing scenario. At some point I used a glove as a makeshift cheek pad. Testing was done at 100 yards.

I was most impressed by the Troy M7A1 PDW's ability to go anywhere. It's so tiny you can fit it in a small bag or throw it in your vehicle and have ample firepower if needed. It's a small gun with big performance, and the timing is right for such a product.

For working professionals, it is an effective CQB weapon, taking up less space just about everywhere. If your objective doesn't call for a longer weapon, the M7A1 PDW should fare extremely well with the right ammunition on board. It conceals well, and Troy also offers a select-fire version as well. For more information, visit worldoftroy.com or call 866-788-6412. SW


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Reinventing The WHEEL

FAST, ACCURATE AND RELIABLE WHEELGUNS BUILT TO WIN WHEN IT COUNTS!

BY RICHARD JOHNSON



The classic revolver has proven to be quite a capable performer, particularly with modern upgrades. Note this model's enhanced eight-round capacity.

Once the mainstay of both law enforcement service and many shooting competitions, the mighty revolver has taken a backseat to high-capacity semi-automatic pistols in recent decades. However, revolvers remain formidable tools in the right hands for both competitive and law enforcement duties.

Smith & Wesson manufactures a wide range of firearms, but it has never left the wheelgun behind. From quality standard models to highly specialized tools, the company offers a number of exceptional revolvers.

There are two lines of S&W revolvers of particular note: the Pro Series and those from the Performance Center. Performance Center guns are highly specialized guns tuned by some of the best gunsmiths in the business. Typical Performance Center revolvers feature tuned actions, target crowns and cylinders cut or chamfered for faster reloads.

Pro Series guns are still considered stock revolvers for competition divisions, but they are a step closer to Performance Center upgrades from the standard models. Pro Series models commonly come equipped with high-visibility sights, improved grips and other small upgrades that can enhance a shooter's performance on the range or street.

While many law enforcement officers carry a revolver as a backup or off-duty gun, many are used by members of tactical teams. When making a high-risk entry into a building, an officer holding a ballistic shield will often lead the way. A shield can induce a malfunction in a semi-automatic pistol if it interferes with the slide. Additionally, some semi-automatic pistols can malfunction when held at odd angles or with a less-than-perfect grip. For an entry team attempting to rescue hostages, the stakes are never higher and the reliability of a revolver helps ensure that the good guys go home alive.

Here is a sampling of the specialized revolvers currently available from Smith & Wesson. From race guns to defensive models, there is one here for you. For more, visit smith-wesson.com or call 800-331-0852.



M&P R8

In the era of modern pistols that hold more than a dozen cartridges in each magazine, a wheelgun in the hands of a police officer seems archaic. However, many SWAT officers know that a revolver can fill an important role during tactical operations, especially for the lead officer on an entry. The M&P R8 is a purpose-built, full-sized revolver with a 5-inch barrel and an eight-round cylinder. Even with its large size, Smith & Wesson was able to keep the weight down to only about 36 ounces through the use of a scandium alloy frame. The underside of the barrel has an accessory rail for adding a light or laser, and a matte black finish helps reduce glare.

SPECS

CALIBER:	.357 Magnum/.38 Special
BARREL:	5 inches
OA LENGTH:	10.5 inches
WEIGHT:	36.3 ounces (empty)
GRIP:	Synthetic
SIGHTS:	Front post, adjustable rear
ACTION:	DA/SA
FINISH:	Matte black
CAPACITY:	8
MSRP:	$1,329

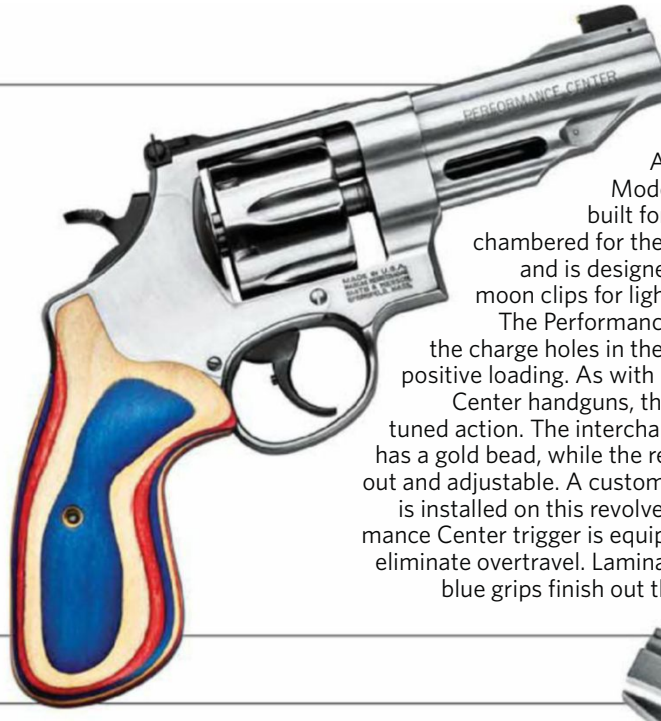


MODEL 60

An excellent choice for concealed carry, the 3-inch-barreled Model 60 revolver also makes for a good competition gun in CCW matches. Fitted with wood grips that force a high hold on the gun, the wheelgun has a ramped front night sight for quick target acquisitions and fast follow-up shots. The rear sight is adjustable so the shooter can dial in his or her ammunition for precise shots in either a competition or self-defense situation. The matte stainless steel finish looks good and resists corrosion. Since the gun is in the Pro Series, and is not a Performance Center piece, a shooter can run this in a stock revolver competition division.

SPECS

CALIBER:	.357 Magnum/.38 Special
BARREL:	3 inches
OA LENGTH:	7.75 inches
WEIGHT:	23.2 ounces (empty)
GRIPS:	Wood
SIGHTS:	Night front, adjustable rear
ACTION:	DA/SA
FINISH:	Matte stainless
CAPACITY:	5
MSRP:	$799

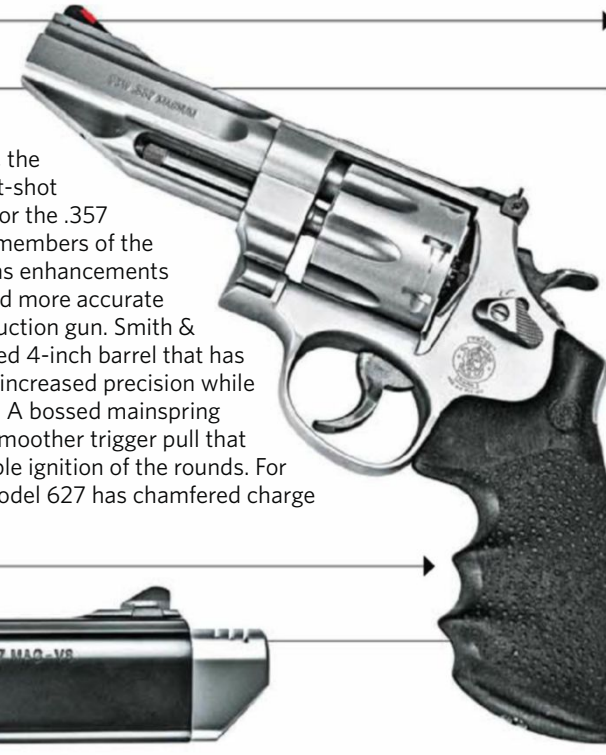


MODEL 625

A true race gun, the Model 625 is a revolver built for speed. The gun is chambered for the .45 ACP cartridge and is designed to work with full moon clips for lightning-fast reloads. The Performance Center chamfers the charge holes in the cylinder for quick, positive loading. As with other Performance Center handguns, the Model 625 has a tuned action. The interchangeable front sight has a gold bead, while the rear sight is blacked out and adjustable. A custom teardrop hammer is installed on this revolver, while the Performance Center trigger is equipped with a stop to eliminate overtravel. Laminated red, white and blue grips finish out the look of this gun.

SPECS

CALIBER:	.45 ACP
BARREL:	4 inches
OA LENGTH:	10.5 inches
WEIGHT:	42 ounces (empty)
GRIP:	Altamont laminate
SIGHTS:	Gold bead front, adjustable rear
ACTION:	DA/SA
FINISH:	Satin stainless
CAPACITY:	6
MSRP:	$1,079

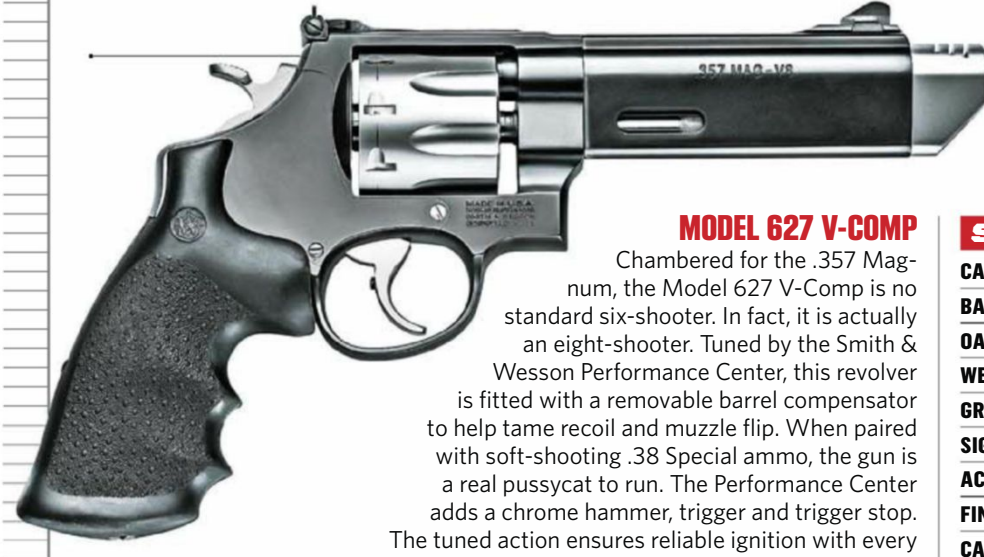


MODEL 627

Part of the Pro Series, the Model 627 is an eight-shot revolver chambered for the .357 Magnum. Like other members of the Pro Series, the gun has enhancements that make it faster and more accurate than a standard production gun. Smith & Wesson uses a tapered 4-inch barrel that has a recessed crown for increased precision while protecting the crown. A bossed mainspring is used for a lighter, smoother trigger pull that will still provide reliable ignition of the rounds. For easier reloads, the Model 627 has chamfered charge holes in the cylinder.

SPECS

CALIBER:	.357 Magnum/.38 Special
BARREL:	4 inches
OA LENGTH:	9.75 inches
WEIGHT:	41.2 ounces (empty)
GRIP:	Synthetic
SIGHTS:	Interchangeable front, adjustable rear
ACTION:	DA/SA
FINISH:	Matte stainless
CAPACITY:	8
MSRP:	$999



MODEL 627 V-COMP

Chambered for the .357 Magnum, the Model 627 V-Comp is no standard six-shooter. In fact, it is actually an eight-shooter. Tuned by the Smith & Wesson Performance Center, this revolver is fitted with a removable barrel compensator to help tame recoil and muzzle flip. When paired with soft-shooting .38 Special ammo, the gun is a real pussycat to run. The Performance Center adds a chrome hammer, trigger and trigger stop. The tuned action ensures reliable ignition with every silky-smooth stroke of the trigger. The synthetic grip ensures the shooter has ample control on the gun during competition and recreational shooting.

SPECS

CALIBER:	.357 Magnum/.38 Special
BARREL:	5 inches
OA LENGTH:	11 inches
WEIGHT:	47 ounces (empty)
GRIP:	Synthetic
SIGHTS:	Adjustable
ACTION:	DA/SA
FINISH:	Two-tone
CAPACITY:	8
MSRP:	$1,559


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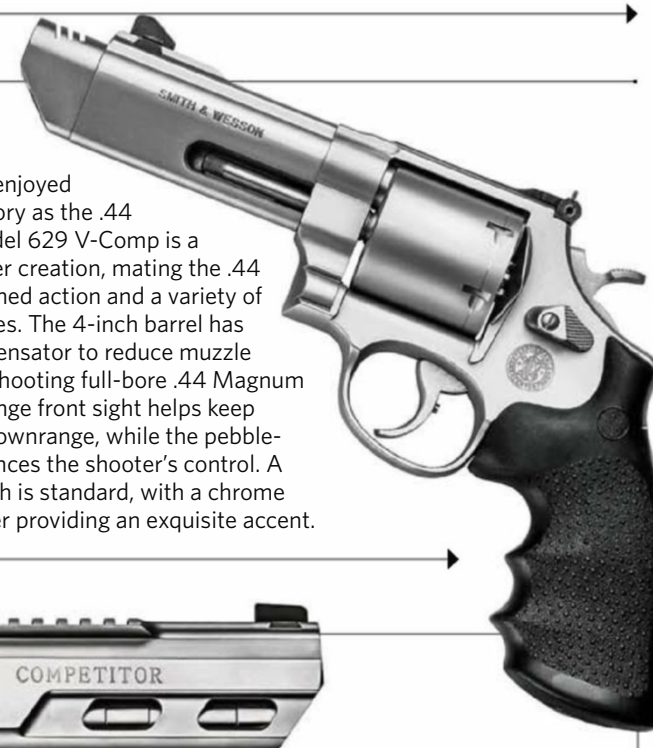


MODEL 629 COMPETITOR

From knocking down bowling pins with magnum loads or cutting precise holes in paper with soft-shooting target loads, big-bore firepower is popular with a range of shooters. This .44 Magnum revolver offers a long sight radius with a 6-inch barrel plus the ability to easily add an optic to the top of the gun. The underside of the barrel has an adjustable weight system to help reduce muzzle flip. For help in controlling the gun with even the hottest loads, Smith & Wesson installs a set of highly regarded Hogue synthetic grips on the Model 629 Competitor. A tuned action is standard on this revolver, as is the beautiful glass-bead stainless finish.

SPECS

CALIBER:	.44 Magnum/ .44 Special
BARREL:	6 inches
OA LENGTH:	11.25 inches
WEIGHT:	57.7 ounces (empty)
GRIP:	Hogue synthetic
SIGHTS:	Adjustable
ACTION:	DA/SA
FINISH:	Glass bead
CAPACITY:	6
MSRP:	$1,549



MODEL 629 V-COMP

Few calibers have enjoyed such a storied history as the .44 Magnum. The Model 629 V-Comp is a Performance Center creation, mating the .44 Magnum with a tuned action and a variety of competitive features. The 4-inch barrel has a removable compensator to reduce muzzle rise when rapidly shooting full-bore .44 Magnum loads. A bright orange front sight helps keep rounds on target downrange, while the pebble-textured grip enhances the shooter's control. A stainless steel finish is standard, with a chrome trigger and hammer providing an exquisite accent.

SPECS

CALIBER:	.44 Magnum/.44 Special
BARREL:	4 inches
OA LENGTH:	10 inches
WEIGHT:	44.1 ounces (empty)
GRIP:	Synthetic
SIGHTS:	Adjustable
ACTION:	DA/SA
FINISH:	Matte stainless
CAPACITY:	6
MSRP:	$1,559

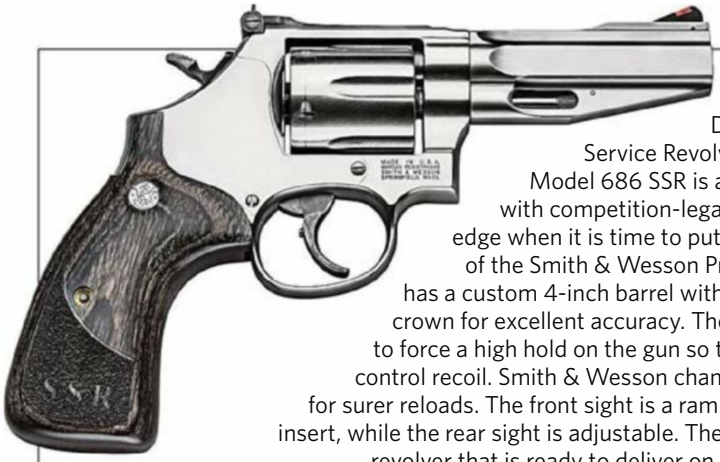


MODEL 686 COMPETITOR

Another competition gun, the Model 686 Competitor is fitted with a weighted barrel to help control muzzle flip during recoil. The included barrel weights are adjustable so the shooter can tune the gun to the precise amount of muzzle flip reduction required. Additionally, the 6-inch barrel has an accessory rail along its top for the addition of a competition optic. The Performance Center tunes the gun for a smooth action and installs a trigger with a stop. Both the trigger and the hammer are chromed while the rest of the gun enjoys a glass-bead stainless finish. Hogue synthetic grips are used to cushion the hand and provide the shooter with increased control of the gun during recoil.

SPECS

CALIBER:	.357 Magnum/.38 Special
BARREL:	6 inches
OA LENGTH:	11.5 inches
WEIGHT:	53 ounces (empty)
GRIP:	Hogue synthetic
SIGHTS:	Patridge front, adjustable rear
ACTION:	DA/SA
FINISH:	Glass bead
CAPACITY:	6
MSRP:	$1,439



MODEL 686 SSR

Designed for the Stock Service Revolver (SSR) division, the Model 686 SSR is a standard Model 686 with competition-legal upgrades for a slight edge when it is time to put lead downrange. Part of the Smith & Wesson Pro Series, this revolver has a custom 4-inch barrel with a recessed, precision crown for excellent accuracy. The rich wood grips help to force a high hold on the gun so the shooter can better control recoil. Smith & Wesson chamfers the charge holes for surer reloads. The front sight is a ramp with a bright orange insert, while the rear sight is adjustable. The result is an upgraded revolver that is ready to deliver on target when it counts.

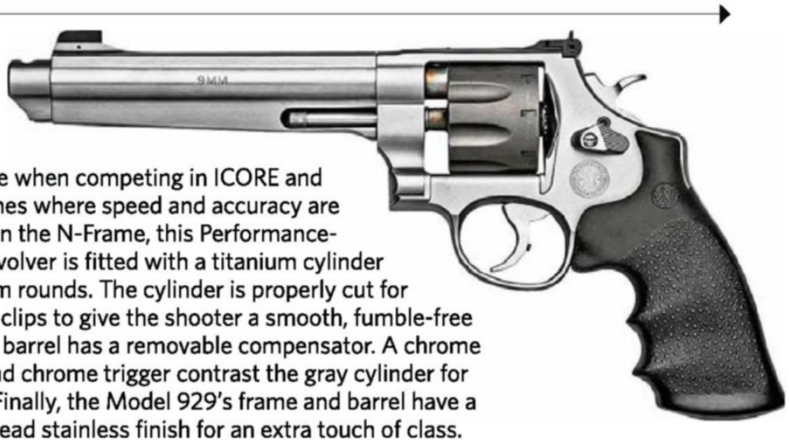
SPECS

CALIBER:	.357 Magnum/.38 Special
BARREL:	4 inches
OA LENGTH:	9.5 inches
WEIGHT:	38.3 ounces (empty)
GRIP:	Wood
SIGHTS:	Interchangeable front, adjustable rear
ACTION:	DA/SA
FINISH:	Satin stainless
CAPACITY:	6
MSRP:	$999

SPECS

CALIBER:	9mm
BARREL:	6.5 inches
OA LENGTH:	12.25 inches
WEIGHT:	44.2 ounces (empty)
GRIP:	Synthetic
SIGHTS:	Patridge front, adjustable rear
ACTION:	DA/SA
FINISH:	Glass bead
CAPACITY:	8
MSRP:	$1,189

MODEL 929



Signed by revolver master Jerry Miculek, the Model 929 is an excellent choice when competing in ICORE and other revolver matches where speed and accuracy are so important. Built on the N-Frame, this Performance-Center-enhanced revolver is fitted with a titanium cylinder that holds eight 9mm rounds. The cylinder is properly cut for the use of full moon clips to give the shooter a smooth, fumble-free reload. The 6.5-inch barrel has a removable compensator. A chrome teardrop hammer and chrome trigger contrast the gray cylinder for a nice visual effect. Finally, the Model 929's frame and barrel have a high-quality, glass-bead stainless finish for an extra touch of class.

This revolutionary new design is a marvel of engineering

UP-12

$1,395

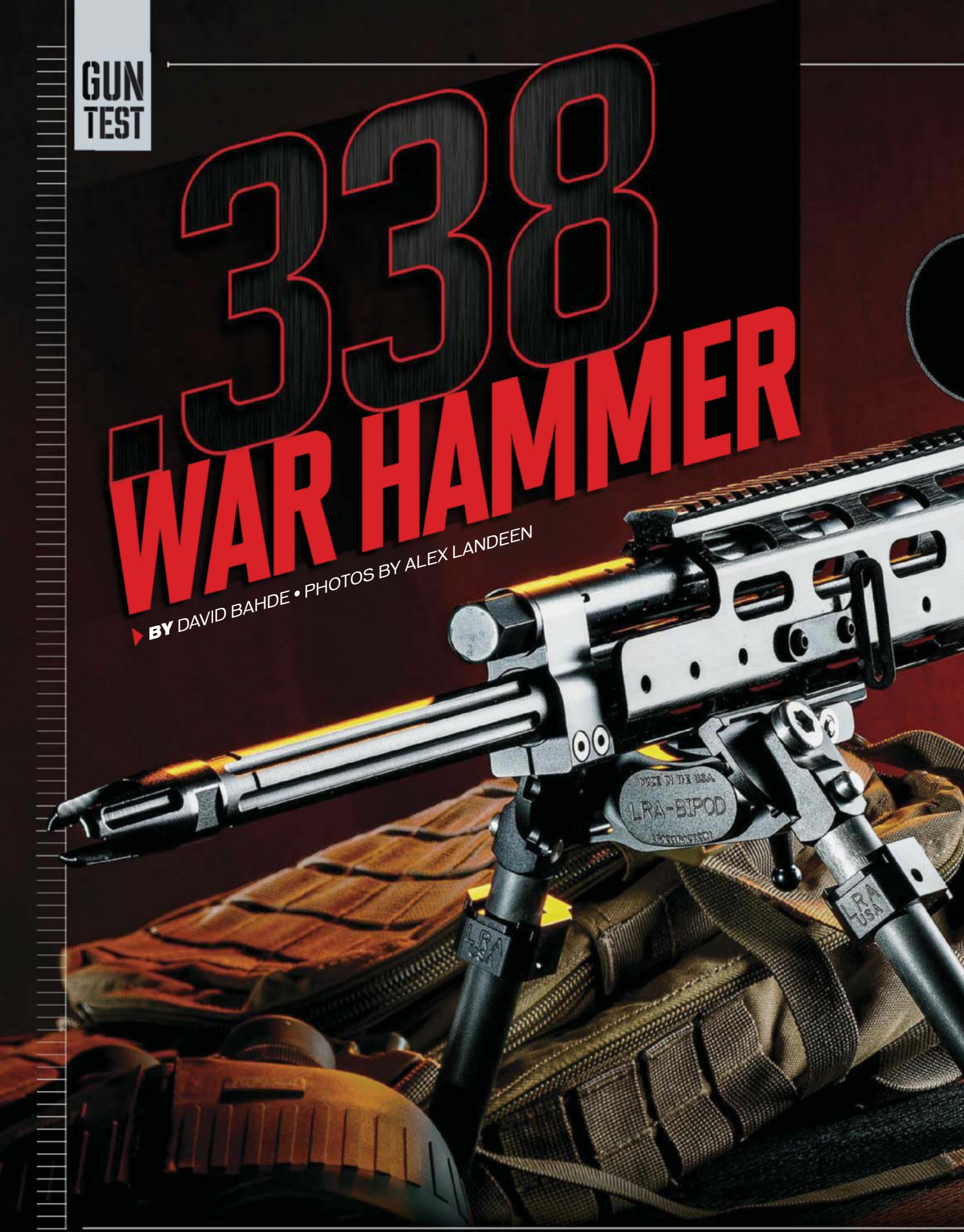
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16 SHOT - PUMP ACTION - DOUBLE BARREL REPEATER

.338 WAR HAMMER

BY DAVID BAHDE • PHOTOS BY ALEX LANDEEN





Named after an uncommonly strong type of Viking sword, the Ulfberht is tank-tough and accurate at extreme distances. Shown with a Steiner 5-25x56mm MSR scope and an LRA bipod.

Alexander Arms' Ulfberht strikes like lightning out to 1,625 yards!

Semi-automatic precision rifles are extremely valuable to marksmen. Compared to precision bolt-action rifles, semi-autos are more versatile, offer faster follow-up shots and provide more firepower. First-round hits are critical in military and law enforcement circles, but follow-up shots are just as important. Semi-autos make it easy to watch your hits without having to come off the rifle. Unfortunately, big-bore semi-autos have had a rocky history. Cold-bore consistency with early .308 Winchester/7.62mm NATO ARs was dismal. M1A rifles were better, but equipping and maintaining them could be costly. Thankfully modern big-bore ARs have leapt forward exponentially lately in terms of accuracy and reliability. Naturally, this has all led the way for military and police snipers to use similar platforms but with larger chamberings and more power.

More Power

The .338 Lapua Magnum is currently the most popular intermediate soft-target cartridge for militaries and even a few police agencies. While the .50 BMG works as an anti-materiel cartridge, it 's just not practical for much else. Big .50s are heavy, with major recoil and punishing muzzle blasts. While their penetration is impressive, it's too much for urban work. Operators needed a rifle that bridged the gap between the .308 and the .50. For years, the .300 Winchester Magnum filled that role in America, but it's not much more than a faster .308. The rest of the world has been using the .338



"The Ulfberht was built to dominate, and I imagine it would do just fine in that endeavor."



The oversized mag well easily accepts the large polymer magazine, which is designed to hold 10 rounds of .338 Lapua ammo.

Lapua with great success. The U.S. is finally recognizing its value, as shown by SOCOM's selection of the Remington MSR in 2013. What we needed next was inevitable: a semi-auto .338 Lapua.

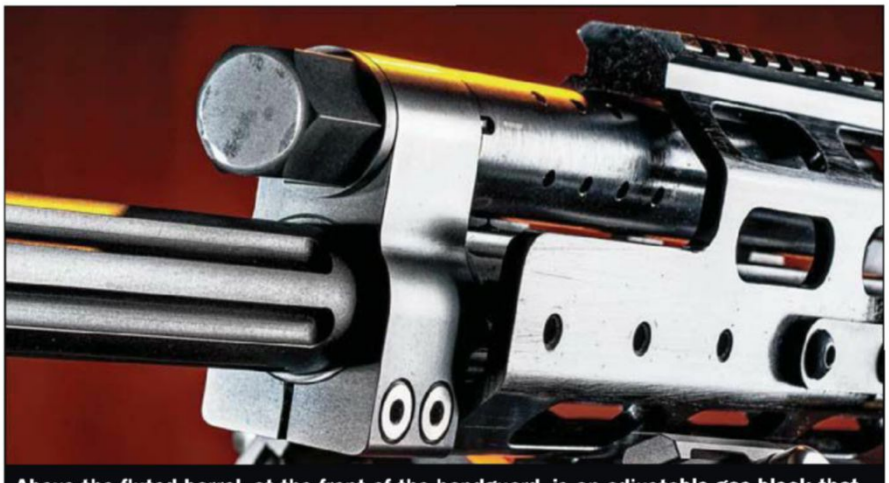
Building a reliable semi-auto in .338 Lapua Magnum is not easy. With the increase in scale, you'll also run into an increase in problems. The magazines have to run flawlessly, and this alone has taken companies a few years to work out. Several companies have their own takes on semi-auto .338s, and I've tested most of them. Some focus on portability while others try to cut down on weight, and various gas systems are used. One company, Alexander Arms, has unveiled a rather innovative design—the Ulfberht.

Meet The Ulfberht

Bill Alexander of Alexander Arms is known for building tough, reliable and proven AR-based rifles. He's always looking to improve on the 5.56mm NATO cartridge, and his 6.5 Grendel does that nicely while his .50 Beowulf provides serious energy on target in a compact package designed for close quarters. So it only makes sense that Bill would work with another powerhouse cartridge, the .338 Lapua, to create his semi-auto Ulfberht.

First off, everything about the Ulfberht is built to last. The rifle starts with a forged 9310 steel receiver and an aluminum top cover. The 27.5-inch, 4150 chrome-moly barrel features six-groove, 1-in-9.3-inch-twist, Enfield-pattern rifling. The muzzle sports 18x1.5 threading—a common European .338 Lapua thread pattern—and comes equipped with a three-prong flash suppressor made of 4140 steel.

Another special feature is the rifle's adjustable gas piston operating system. The gas block is made of casehardened 8620 steel while the carrier, bolt and extractor are all made from 17-4 precipitation-hardened stainless steel. The recoil springs are rated for 6 million cycles. The twin ejectors are crafted from S7 tool steel, and the locking lugs



Above the fluted barrel, at the front of the handguard, is an adjustable gas block that allows users to fine-tune the Ulfberht rifle to specific mission requirements.

SPECS

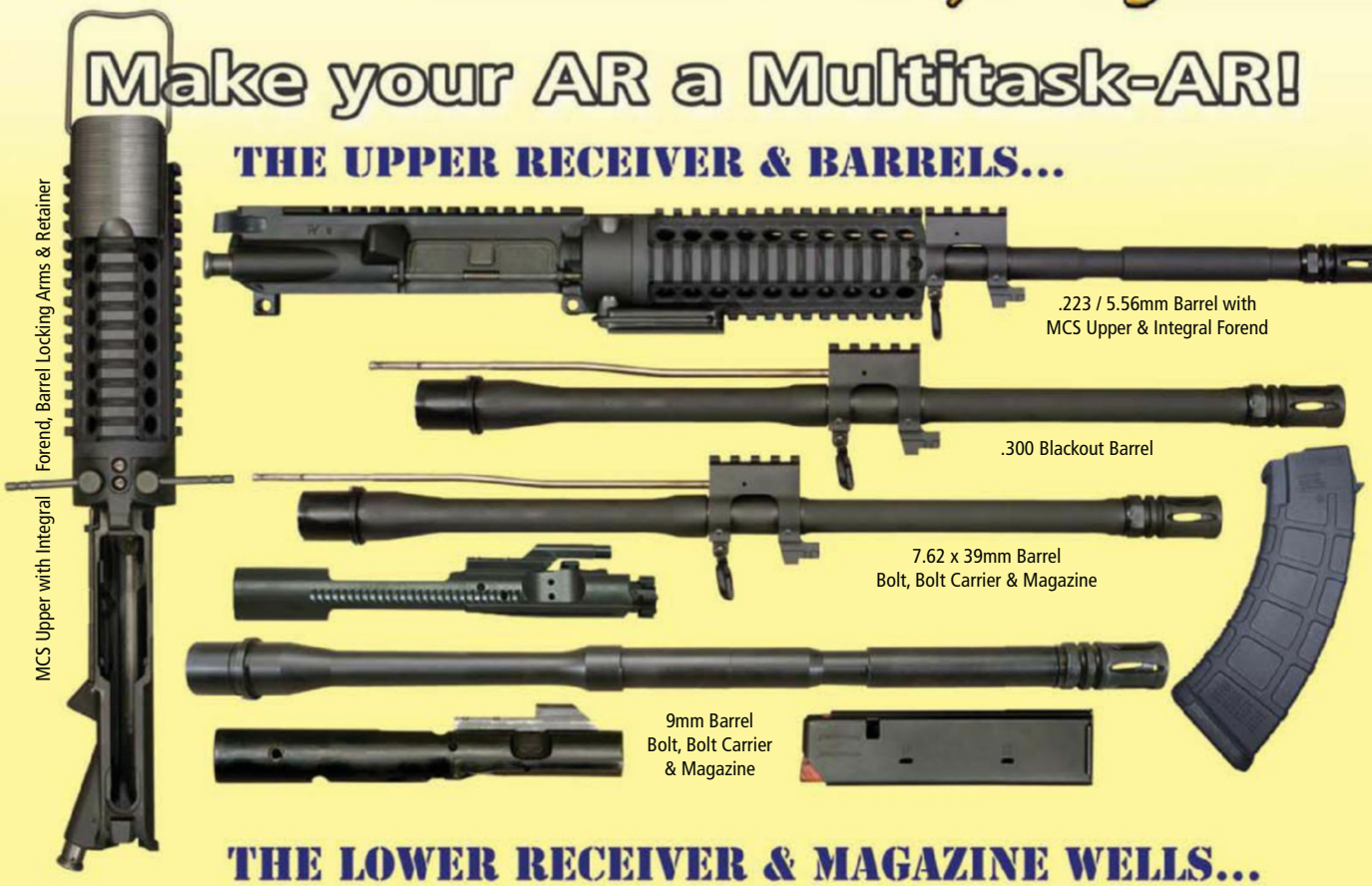
ALEXANDER ARMS ULFBERHT

Caliber:	.338 Lapua Magnum
Barrel:	27.5 inches
OA Length:	41.25-50 inches
Weight:	19.8 pounds (empty)
Stock:	Magpul PRS
Sights:	None
Action:	Piston-operated semi-auto
Finish:	Matte black
Capacity:	10+1
MSRP:	$5,800

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RIGHT: The adjustable Magpul PRS buttstock is installed on a sturdy hinge that allows it to fold to the right side of the receiver.

FAR RIGHT: The large, knurled, reciprocating charging handle makes it easy to operate the rifle.





"If you are in the market for a serious .338 Lapua semi-auto built to last, the Ulfberht needs to be very high on your list."

are made from hardened 8620 steel. A large charging handle is mounted on the right side of the receiver.

Surrounding the barrel and piston system is a hardcoat anodized aluminum handguard with a long top rail that mates up with the receiver's for a full-length, 30-MOA-offset mounting platform for scopes and accessories. The handguard features several lightening cuts, and its smooth sides and bottom are drilled and tapped for adding accessory rails where needed.

The Ulfberht comes with a folding Magpul PRS stock for easier carry and transport. Mounted solidly to the receiver with a steel hinge, the stock locks into place when it's folded and extended. You can release the stock with one hand using the top-mounted release button. Also, the PRS design features thumbwheels that allow you to adjust the length of pull and cheek height with just your fingers.

The pistol grip is a Hogue Deluxe model, while the safety is similar to an AR's. As for the trigger, a Geissele Automatics two-stage, 4.5-pound SSA unit is installed. A paddle-style magazine release is located just in front of the triggerguard. The Ulfberht uses Alexander Arms' own reinforced-polymer, double-stack, 10-round magazines. My test Ulfberht came in a hard case with custom-fitted foam inserts and four magazines.

For optics, Bill Alexander was kind enough to send along a Steiner 5-25x56mm M5Xi Military scope with an H59 reticle as well as a set of Seekins Precision rings of the proper height.



The Ulfberht's design allows users to single-load .338 Lapua rounds through the ejection port as needed.

Precision Training

To really test the Ulfberht, I took it along with me to Pump Precision Rifle Training in Washington, Texas, which is run by Chase "Pump" Stroud. Chase has been a top Precision Rifle Series (PRS) competitor for years, and he teaches several top-notch long-range courses.

With a strong storm coming in, we jumped right into Chase's Extreme Long-Range (ELR) training on the first day. I removed the Ulfberht from its case and zeroed it with Barnes' 300-grain OTM ammo. I was on paper in less than five rounds with a group measuring about an inch wide. Using a combi-

PERFORMANCE

ALEXANDER ARMS ULFBERHT

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
Black Hills 250 SMK	2,940	1.25
Barnes 300 OTM	2,610	0.75
Desert Tech 300 SMK	2,600	0.60
Lapua 250 Scenar	2,950	0.86

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in fps by chronograph, and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 100 yards.

nation of my new Kestrel 5500 and Chase's experience, we dialed in the 500-yard elevation and confirmed our zero with five rounds on a 12-inch steel target. I put a final confirmation in the dead center of a 3-inch hostage-taker target prior to moving to 800 yards.

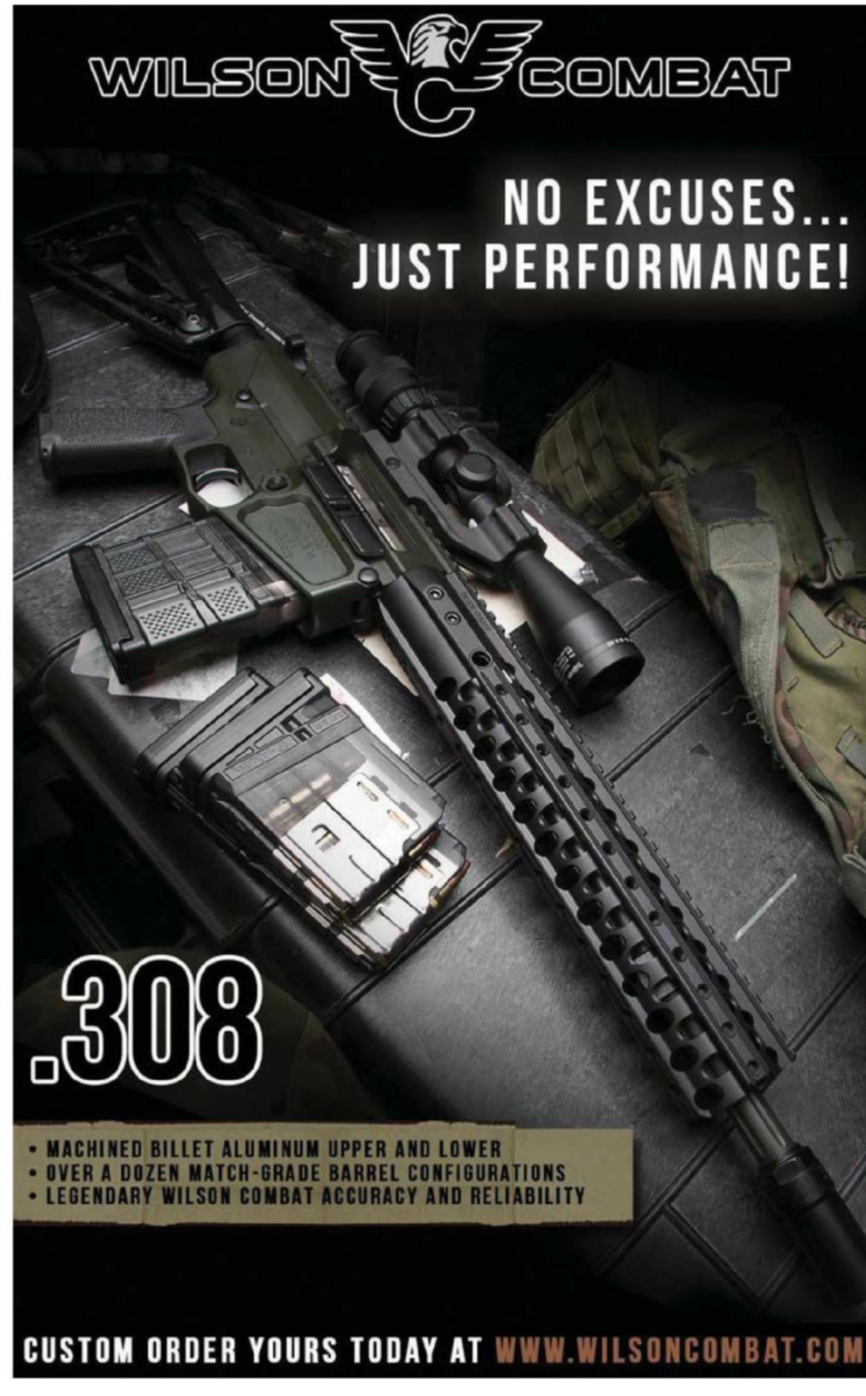
At 800 yards, the Ulfberht proved just as accurate, with five consecutive hits on steel. Moving to 1,000 and then 1,100 yards, it was almost too simple to make hits. Thanks to superb wind calls from Chase, I was on target on my second round and hitting steel at 1,100 yards about as fast as I could pull the trigger. The Ulfberht's recoil is typical for a .338 Lapua semi-auto—not substantial but noticeable. Once locked in position, the rifle stayed in place while firing, moving to the rear with little muzzle rise. For support, I used an Atlas bipod along with a Wiebad Pump Pillow at the rear.

The plan was to shoot out to a mile, but Mother Nature made that impossible. A supercell quickly moved in, and rather than risk lightning and getting soaked, we settled for just under a mile at 1,625 yards. Shooting from prone, I dialed up the 21 or so mils of elevation. The Steiner scope made this easy. Adjustments based on calls were made using the H59 reticle. Chase called the wind and hits using a spotting scope. The target was a 36-by-36-inch white steel square with a 12-inch orange circle in the middle. On steel on the third round, I fired the remaining seven shots in the magazine as quickly as I could reacquire my hold and let the trigger reset. Five of the remaining seven shots hit steel, and the last three clustered inside 6 inches on the edge of the center circle. Chase then climbed behind the rifle, held for wind and proceeded to cluster three out of five rounds around the center circle, leaving little doubt as to the Ulfberht's capabilities.

Severe weather kept the Ulfberht at bay until I could return to my home range. Of course, shooting groups at 100 yards with a .338 Lapua Magnum can be a bit problematic. In my experience, these rifles often group better at 300 yards, and semi-autos require a whole other set of skills and positioning to ensure you are not adding to the equation.

— *Continued on page 128*

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GUN TEST

WE ARE LEGION

Sig Sauer's elite Legion series unites those looking for professional-grade firepower.

BY DAVID BAHDE

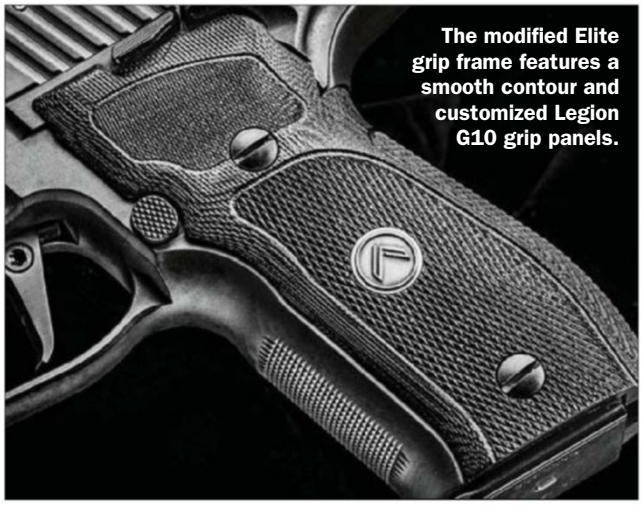




For decades, professionals have relied upon Sig Sauer pistols to survive in battle, and now Sig aficionados can join its elite "Legion" for exclusive guns and top-tier gear.

For decades, Sig Sauer has dedicated itself to providing weapons that are designed by and for professionals, including elite military units and law enforcement agencies worldwide, which has given the company a somewhat unique perspective in the firearms world. They company has also enjoyed commercial success, but it's always been secondary to the military/police market.

Sig's weapons are often designed with input from working professionals who carry firearms for a living. Even the company's competition pistols were designed with input from top shooters. Going further, Sig Sauer has often made changes at the request of its most prolific users. This also leads to the company skipping many of the industry fads; Sig Sauer just wants to build high-quality weapons that can be depended on to save lives. All of this careful attention to detail has made Sig Sauer's pistols very popular. You could say that its fans are legion. Which brings us to Sig's new, members-only Legion series.



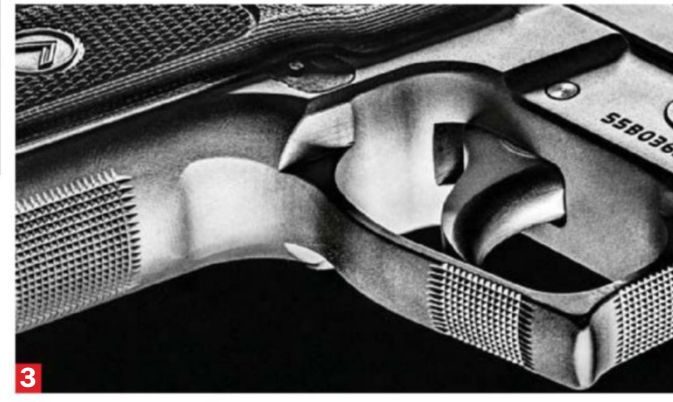
The modified Elite grip frame features a smooth contour and customized Legion G10 grip panels.



1



2



3

1. Sig Sauer's new X-RAY day/night front sight is easy to see with a larger green dot and a tritium insert.

2. The rear sight has smaller tritium inserts and a ledge-style design for emergency one-handed slide racking.

3. The front face and bottom of the undercut triggerguard sport expertly crafted checkering that matches the frontstrap.

Join The Ranks

Sig Sauer's new Legion program is dedicated to discerning buyers and working professionals. Essentially, purchasing a Legion firearm—three are currently available, but more are surely on the way—gets you entry into a specialized group. As a Legion member, you'll have access to an exclusive website where you'll be the first to know about special Sig Sauer events and new additions to the product line. This is also another way to access Sig's excellent customer support.

Each Legion gun comes with a case, a Legion challenge coin and three high-quality magazines. You'll also have access to Legion-specific gear and accessories, all of which is made by top-notch manufacturers in the industry. Currently, Legion Kydex holsters are made by Black Point Tactical, a premier holster-maker. Legion knives are also available from seasoned knifemakers like Daniel Winkler, and soon SureFire will join the Legion accessories stable. All of the Legion-exclusive merchandise is top tier. Nothing going into this program is low grade.

The three Legion pistols currently available include the legendary double-action/single-action (DA/SA) P226 in 9mm, .40 S&W or .357 SIG; a single-action-only (SAO) P226 in 9mm; and the DA/SA P229 in 9mm, .40 S&W or .357 SIG. Each model was designed with significant input from active military and law enforcement personnel, providing a pistol well designed for use in any condition.

To that end, each of these pistols comes with a number of enhancements, including a tuned action with a Short Reset Trigger (SRT). The frames feature reduced and contoured Elite beavertails, checkering along the frontstrap and an undercut triggerguard (also checkered on the bottom) that offers a higher grip on the frame for superb control. Custom checkered G10 grips featuring the Legion medallion adorn each pistol.

While the P226 SAO comes with a Master Shop Super Match Flat Trigger, the DA/SA P226 and P229 come with Grayguns Intermediate Reach Adjustable Triggers. The pistols also sport low-profile slide releases and decocking levers to prevent snagging on the draw. Each control is checkered and easy to operate with gloved hands.

Each slide features forward and rear serrations, stylish contouring and Sig Sauer Electro-Optics X-RAY day/night sights. The front sights have large green dots surrounding their tritium inserts. The rear sights have tritium inserts with no dots to interfere with a clean sight picture. Within the slides are match-grade barrels and solid steel guide rods. Finally, each pistol is coated in a proprietary Legion Gray PVD and comes with three magazines.

I received a 9mm P229 Legion for testing. The internals were factory polished and tuned for an incredibly smooth DA trigger pull in the 8-pound range. The SA pull is crisp thanks to the SRT design. I found the grip frame fit my hand well and offered a lower bore axis for less felt recoil. The checkered grips secured my hands without being too aggressive. The controls were nicely subdued while still being very positive.

SPECS

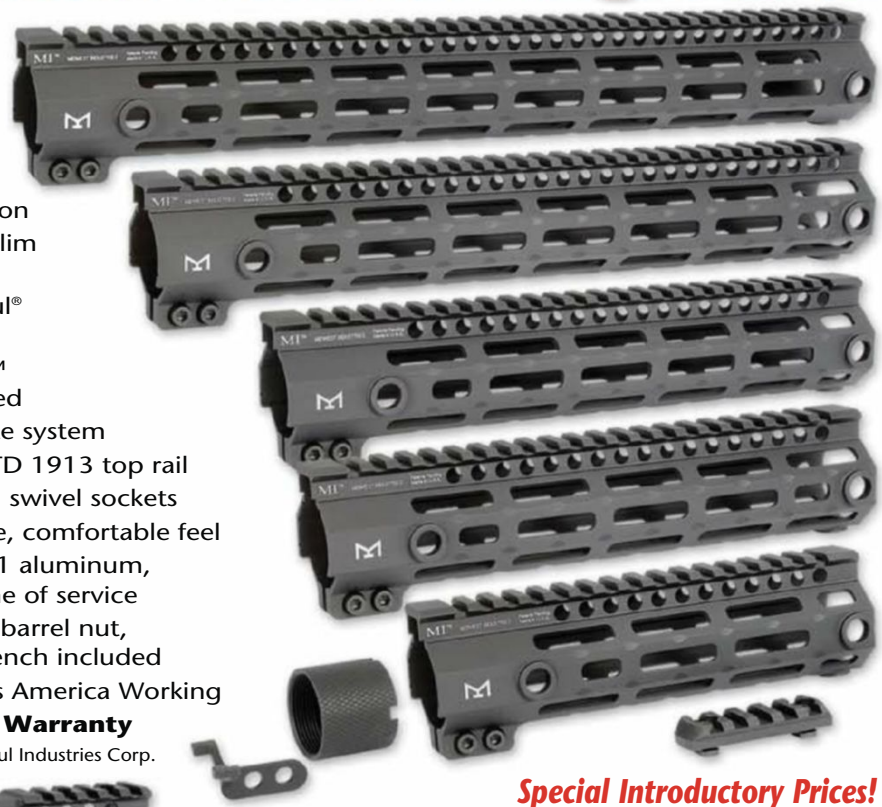
SIG SAUER P229 LEGION	
Caliber:	9mm
Barrel:	3.9 inches
OA Length:	7.4 inches
Weight:	32 ounces (empty)
Grips:	G10
Sights:	X-RAY day/night
Action:	DA/SA
Finish:	Legion Gray PVD
Capacity:	15+1
MSRP:	$1,349



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10.5 Inch Carbine - 7.9 ozs with barrel nut	#MI-G3ML10	**$169.95**
12.625 Inch Rifle - 8.8 ozs with barrel nut	#MI-G3ML12	**$189.95**
15 Inch Rifle - 10.3 ozs with barrel nut	#MI-G3ML15	**$199.95**

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FAR LEFT: For enhanced accuracy, the P229 Legion comes with a Grayguns Intermediate Reach Adjustable Trigger coupled with a short-reset tuning.

LEFT: The top of the P229's PVD-coated slide features the Legion logo, immediately helping it stand out.

The slide has rounded corners to facilitate concealed or off-duty carry. I was happy to see that the X-RAY sights were easy to acquire and made of steel without being overly tall; the rear sight has a functional ledge for emergency one-handed slide racking. The Legion marking on top of the slide was another nice touch. It sets this pistol apart from the rest on the market.

The Legion Gray PVD finish was smoothly applied, and the three included magazines also had this durable coating for use in any condition. My test pistol came with Black Point Tactical's Legion-marked "Leather Wing" holster and magazine pouch.

Pro-Grade P229

The P229 Legion's accuracy was excellent—something you come to expect with a Sig Sauer pistol. My own P226 SAO is as accurate as many custom pistols. I've also used a number of P220s over the years that were very precise. The P229 Legion proved to be the most accurate with Sig's own 124-grain V-Crown JHPs, creating a 25-yard group that measured 1.25 inches. Every load produced five-shot groups in the 1.5- to 2-inch range firing in SA mode from the bench. Moving to 7 yards and switching to DA, the P229 Legion really liked the Barnes 115-grain TAC-XPD ammo. With light recoil and quick cycling, the pistol was very pleasant to shoot. Drawing, moving and shooting quickly, my groups stayed within 3 inches. Whether I was at the bench or on the move, the Sig Sauer P229 Legion was very accurate.

Next I ran some drills on the range to perfect my drawstroke and DA/SA trigger control. It had been a while since I had to deal with a DA-to-SA transition, but it didn't take me long to get back into the habit with the P229 Legion. Once dialed in, my hits were dead center, with most draw times in the two-second range and a few being faster. The pistol was also easy to control when drawing without firing—one of the reasons many agencies prefer this design. This is my first time with an SRT trigger, and it is was flat-out fast—as fast and controllable as any SA duty pistol I've used. Once the shooting started I found myself enjoying this pistol, which isn't something I say very often when it comes to DA/SA pistols. This pistol was the best DA/SA I've used out of the box so far. The controls functioned well; the P229 Legion operates exactly how one would expect for a professional's pistol.

Black Point Tactical's Leather Wing holster and magazine pouch are very well made. My pistol snapped into place yet remained easy to draw. Two sets of belt loops were provided to facilitate different belt sizes. The holster edges were smooth with crisp molding for the pistol and magazine. The leather wings wrap around the hip, keeping the pistol in place without letting it dig in. I carried the P229 Legion in this holster for a week or so and it was pretty comfortable, though I prefer to use an inside-the-waistband (IWB) design. Thankfully, Sig also offers IWB holsters for its Legion series pistols. The P229



The Legion series provides serious shooters with serious tools for self-defense. They are expertly tuned to deliver when lives are on the line.

PERFORMANCE

SIG SAUER P229 LEGION

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
Barnes 115 TAC-XPD	1,128	1.48
Black Hills 115 JHP +P	1,342	1.75
Sig Sauer 123 V-Crown JHP	1,178	1.25
Speer 124 Gold Dot	1,138	2.00

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in fps by chronograph, and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 25 yards.

"NOTHING GOING INTO THIS PROGRAM IS LOW GRADE."



Joining Sig Sauer's Legion allows you to get exclusive members-only accessories like Kydex holsters from Black Point Tactical.

Legion fit well in my Milt Sparks IWB holster. It's pretty void of sharp edges and only a bit heavier than polymer-framed pistols, making it well suited to off-duty or concealed carry. I found myself grabbing the P229 Legion consistently for carry on most days.

Rounding out the test was some quality time using my Survival Body Armor tactical vest and chest-mounted holster. Many professionals choose this position when the pistol is a true secondary weapon. When you always have a rifle, your pistol needs to stay close but not get in the way. This carry position is new to me, and I've tried to carry several pistols in this location over the last few months, but this pistol may be the best suited for the task. It takes some practice making sure you do not cover yourself on the draw or while reholstering—probably more of a problem on the range than in real life, but it's still a consideration. Of course, the DA/SA design adds an additional layer of safety in this regard. I worked a few carbine-to-pistol transitions with the P229 Legion; it's just about perfect for this task. It's compact, taking up little room, and pairs well with my SureFire X300 Ultra flashlight.

Tough Enough

With a smooth DA trigger pull, a short reset in SA and proven Sig Sauer accuracy, it just does not get much better than the P229 Legion. Every addition to this pistol is well thought out, matching many of the changes I make on stock pistols. The sights are easy to see, grip properly checkered, controls easy to access, and internals smooth and controllable. The pistol ran flawlessly over hundreds of rounds. Its reliability was unaffected by adding lights. It is suitable for use in a thigh rig, a duty holster, concealment rig, a plate carrier or a vest. Everything about this pistol screams professional. I'm not sure you can get a more versatile handgun.

Normally my DA/SA pistol evaluations end on the range, but that's not the case with the P229 Legion. I plan on carrying it and using it with some frequency. I would not hesitate a second to take this pistol to work, no matter the task. For more information, visit sigsauer.com or call 603-610-3000. SW



THE MISSING LINQ

Crimson Trace's game-changing new light/laser works wirelessly!

BY ROBERT A. SADOWSKI



Crimson Trace's new Linq system allows operators to run a fast-targeting light and laser without any wires to snag on gear.

Crimson Trace is an industry leader in creating integrated laser sights for concealed-carry and personal-defense firearms. The company's Rail Master Pro series took things a step further by combining a laser sight with a tactical light in a compact unit that easily attaches to the Picatinny rail of a handgun, rifle or shotgun. The innovative new Linq system from Crimson Trace takes tactical lights and laser aiming accessories for AR-platform rifles to a whole new level.

No More Wires

The Linq LNQ-100 system features two components. The first is an AR-15-style pistol grip that replaces the factory grip and houses a battery and the Linq controls. The grip communicates with the second component, a rail-mounted laser and light module. Wireless "LiNQ" technology connects the two components so there are no wires to hang up on gun cases, vehicles, fences or any other potential environmental snag points. Plus, the operator can control both the tactical light and laser with their shooting hand. There's no need to use your support hand to control the laser or light, which is necessary with most other tactical lights and laser aiming devices.

The Linq system's wireless technology has been tested against numerous interruption possibilities and has passed numerous tests. It also cannot be hacked. When the light/laser module and grip initially pair, the light stays lit for a few seconds to show they are linked, then it turns off. If the grip unit is "searching" for the light/laser module, the green lights flash. If the control grip has lost connectivity with the laser/light module, the lights will turn red. These indicators are very easy for only the operator to see. Ambidextrous buttons on the pistol grip allow the user to operate the laser/light module in four "on" modes: light and laser together, both strobing, laser only or light only. The polymer control grip—slightly larger than a mil-spec A2-style grip—is comfortable to grasp, and the buttons allow easy activation for both right- and left-handed shooters.

The control grip has been tested on numerous AR platforms from a variety of manufacturers, and it will fit the standard attachment slot on nearly every AR rifle commercially sold. Installation simply requires removing the old pistol grip and adding the new Linq grip. Crimson Trace provides all of the tools and hardware needed for the installation. Finally, the control grip uses a single CR2 battery.

The light/laser module attaches to standard Picatinny and Weaver-style rails and is powered by one CR123 battery. The module features an LED light with a 300-lumen output and a green laser with a 5mW output. The laser has a two-hour run time. The light/laser module, which is similar to the CMR-204 Rail Master Pro, can also be removed from the AR's rail and used on another weapon. Redundant controls on the light/laser module allow the module to be attached to another carbine, rifle or shotgun. Just return the light/laser module to the AR equipped with the Linq grip and the grip and module will sync up again.

The Linq system also employs a sleep mode to conserve power. After 24 hours of inactivity, the system will go into "sleep" mode to conserve battery power while

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The Crimson Trace Linq pistol grip (right) controls the light/laser module (left). Green lights present on both sides of the control grip indicate that the two devices are wirelessly linked and ready for operation.

"The innovative new Linq system from Crimson Trace takes tactical lights and laser aiming accessories for AR-platform rifles to a whole new level."

maintaining the LiNQ between the grip and module. But if the unit is remotely operated by the grip's activation buttons, then the entire system is constantly on and as soon as pressure is applied to the buttons the light and laser are "awakened." Either way, the Linq is ready to run as fast as you need it to.

Tank Tough

Both of the Linq units have passed drop, dust and moisture tests. Just like Crimson Trace's other products, the Linq system is tough and durable. Another nice feature of the Linq system is that the user can mount the light/laser module as far forward on their rifle's handguard as possible, thus eliminating glare when using an optic, and yet there is no longer a need to reach out to turn the module off or change modes. In an emergency situation where an operator's support arm is incapacitated, the shooting hand can easily operate the light/laser.

Crimson Trace is again pushing the envelope and leading the industry as an innovator, and the new Linq system may just be the missing technological link for AR-platform carbines and pistols. For more information, visit crimsontrace.com or call 800-442-2406. SW

LG-350G LASERGRIPS

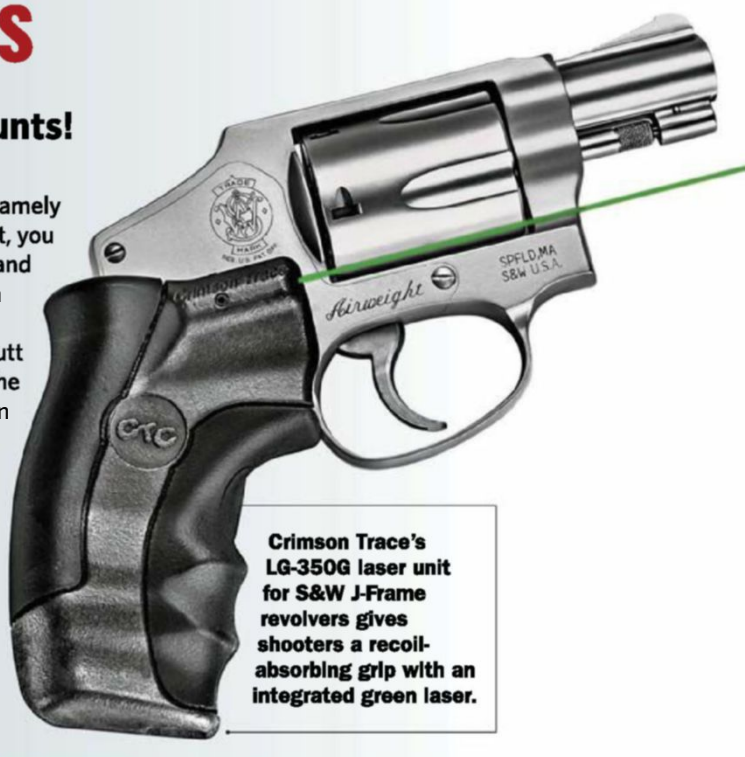
This new green laser unit ensures your deep-cover defender strikes when it counts!

BY MICHAEL O. HUMPHRIES

Say that you are down to your last-ditch defense weapon, namely your trusty Smith & Wesson J-Frame revolver. At this point, you cannot miss, as it could mean the difference between life and death. Enter the new LG-350G, a green laser Lasergrips system from your friends at Crimson Trace.

What is unique about the new LG-350G for S&W's round-butt J-Frame revolvers is its unique dual-surface design. Featuring the company's new Shock-Stop System, these soft rubber panels on the front and rear segments of the grip increase the shooter's in-the-hand comfort while enhancing control and reducing felt recoil. The Lasergrips' middle section is more rigid to enhance stability, and the interior has specially designed recoil-absorbing chambers that run up the inner spine of the grip. An instinctive activation front pad, a master on/off switch, and user-adjustable windage and elevation features round out the Crimson Trace LG-350G package.

The new LG-350G Green Laser Lasergrip retails for $399, while a version with a red laser has a suggested retail price of $319. (crimsontrace.com; 800-442-2406)



Crimson Trace's LG-350G laser unit for S&W J-Frame revolvers gives shooters a recoil-absorbing grip with an integrated green laser.

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MOSSBERG'S TACTICAL TITANS

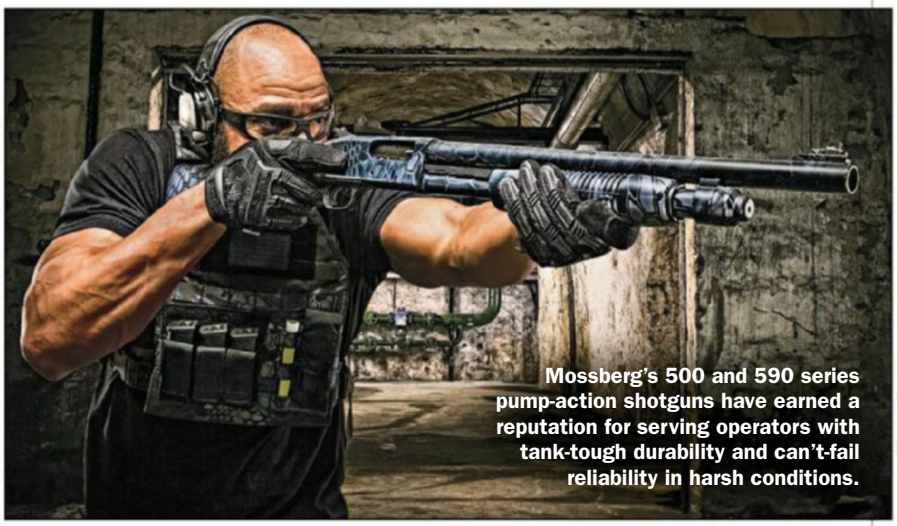
The battle-ready 500 and its many offspring are ready to face any deadly threat!

BY MICHAEL O. HUMPHRIES
PHOTOS BY STRAIGHT 8



Mossberg's 590A1 pump action has proven itself on battlefields and mean streets for years. This particular model sports a Kryptek Typhon camo finish to blend in.

LET'S BE HONEST. High tech is fun. Who doesn't want the latest "high-speed, low-drag" tactical firearm with cutting edge ballistics and ultra-modern features? And along these lines, with the AR dominating the tactical field these days and the next generation of carbines and personal-defense weapons (PDWs) making their way from the battlefields of today into the hands of LE officers tomorrow, it would seem that the modern tactical carbine is *the* preferred choice for those in the know. However, if you talk to the operators who know what it is like to face deadly encounters at ultra-close ranges (where most of them happen), you will pick up on an enduring respect and appreciation for the "humble" scattergun. But this should come as no surprise. With a muzzle diameter at just over .70 caliber, and the ability to fire either a solid projectile slug or a handful of devastatingly effective pellets in a variety of shot sizes, the 12-gauge shotgun can be the ultimate conflict stopper at "conversational" distances. But, today's pump-action shotgun does not have to be a retro-style scattergun that is the mirror image of one that would be found in a police cruiser in the 1950s. In fact, the tactical shotgun of today can be as cutting-edge and adaptable as the most advanced tactical carbine.



Mossberg's 500 and 590 series pump-action shotguns have earned a reputation for serving operators with tank-tough durability and can't-fail reliability in harsh conditions.

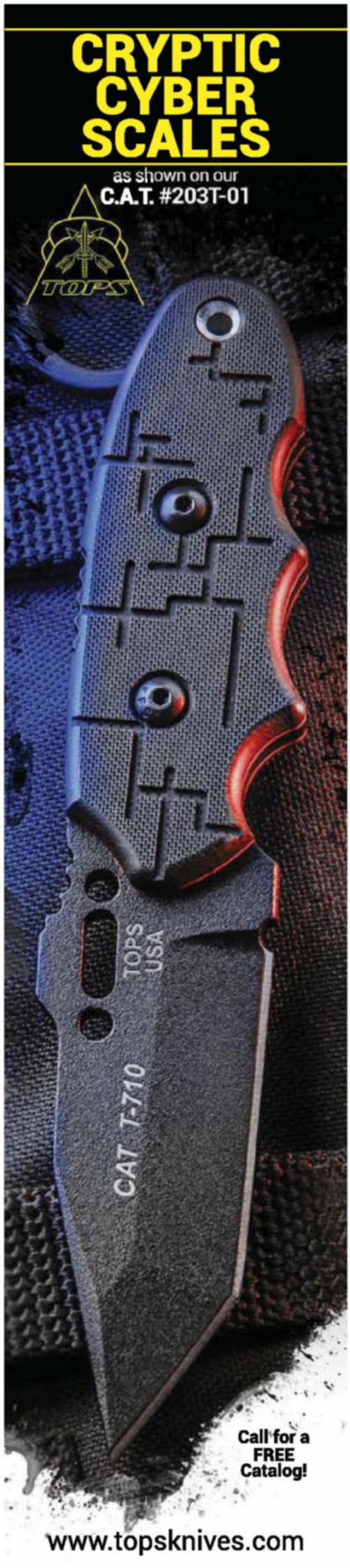
A Cut Above

When it comes to reliable scatterguns, it is hard to beat the tried-and-true Mossberg 500.

Mossberg has sold more than 10 million pump-action 500s over the past 53 years. The reliable 500 was first introduced in 1961, and all subsequent 500s were based on the same basic concept that was first designed by Carl Benson. At its heart, the shotgun features a single, large locking lug that is used to secure the breech, while the magazine tube is located below the barrel. It is a simple yet reliable design—one that has been refined over the years, but it can be hard to improve upon near perfection.

The 500 series was designed to be easy to clean and easy to maintain. It was conceived as a shotgun that could be used in harsh and even dirty conditions, and this has made it ideal for everything from waterfowl hunting to use in tactical and even combat situations. All of this is why it has remained very much a workhorse for sportsmen and women, law enforcement officers and military personnel for more than half a century. And to say that 500 can stand up to the elements is a true understatement.

The Kryptek Typhon 590A1 Special Purpose (officially model #51522) ships with an 18.5-inch barrel, a fast-targeting front sight ramp and a 5+1 capacity.





Mossberg's 590A1 features an aluminum safety mounted on the tang, where it's easy to reach for both left- and right-handed operators.

The 500 and its offshoots have served countless law enforcement officers, sportsmen and members of militaries located around the world, including that of the United States. In fact, the 500 has the distinction of having survived testing by the U.S. government under its stringent MIL-S-3443 shotgun performance requirements, which involved a torture test that required it fire 3,000 rounds of 00 buckshot without a malfunction—which it did. The tests also included what can charitably be described as brutal environmental and handling tests.

While the 500 proved to be a fully capable tactical and sporting shotgun, end-users began requesting an enhanced variant of the basic 500, designed specifically for tactical applications. The result was what would become known as the 12-gauge Mossberg 590. Introduced in 1987, the new variant took the basic 500 platform and added a full nine-round capacity, with the tubular magazine under the 20-inch barrel being capable of holding eight 2¾-inch shells. This was a significant enhancement over the standard 500 that employed a six-round total capacity (as well as even the higher-capacity eight-shot 500 variants).

The 590 was an immediate hit, no doubt due to its reputation for reliable functioning, enhanced capabilities, very reasonable price point (a quality for which all Mossbergs are revered) and yes, its impressive appearance. However, there were still calls for a few more enhancements to the 590 platform.

One of these was to add rigidity to the barrel by increasing the barrel's wall thickness, in response to feedback that "spirited" use of a bayonet on the shotgun required a little more rigidity in the barrel for support. One other request was for the triggerguard and thumb safety, which are made of plastic on the standard 500, to be made from aluminum. Mossberg responded to these requests, and the result was the 590A1, which combined the many appealing characteristics of the standard 590 with an even tougher and more rugged package.

And the new 590A1 series expanded beyond the iconic nine-round model with a bayonet lug and ghost-ring sights to include models with simple bead sights, three-dot sights, Picatinny rails or the familiar ghost-ring sight system to ones with Speedfeed stocks with spring-loaded spare shell storage areas, collapsible AR-style stocks with vertical pistol grips or the traditional synthetic stocks to compact six-shot models with a shortened magazine tube with a 5+1 capacity with 2¾-inch shells and 18.5-inch barrels (the compact models do not feature a bayonet lug). Weights range from 6.75 to 7.5 pounds. Also of note is the fact that while this line was previously restricted to LE and military sales only, in 2009 Mossberg opened the line for sale to the civilian market as well. The result is a wide range of 500- and 590-based shotguns ready to face any tactical situation. For more information, visit mossberg.com or call 203-230-5300.

SOUTHPAW SCATTERGUNS

Mossberg brings some impressive left-handed options to its 500 and 590 series shotguns.

BY PETER SUCIU

LEFT-HANDED SHOOTERS NEVER HAVE IT EASY. For all of its adaptability, Mossberg saw that the ever-popular 500 was lacking in one regard: There weren't models tailor-made for left-handed shooters. Now that problem has been addressed. In fact, the idea for a left-handed Mossberg shotgun, though considered for many years, was only precipitated by modern CAD capabilities when one of the company's manufacturing engineers—who happens to be left-handed—was working on a receiver drawing.

Making what is in essence a mirror image of a firearm did present a few challenges, but Mossberg's engineers were able to work these out quickly. There are also many crossover parts between the 500 and 500L, and the key differences are really in the receiver, barrel, bolt and some internal parts that had to mirror the right-handed components. This allowed for a shotgun that was truly designed with lefties in mind yet retained everything that made the 500 such a tried and tested shotgun.

In the new L-Series line, Mossberg has introduced six tactical models, including a nine-shot version based on the military-approved, battle-hardened 590A1 scattergun. Without further ado, here is a rundown of Mossberg's six tactical L-Series pump-action shotguns, which are truly designed with left-handed shooters and operators in mind.



SPECS

GAUGE:	12; 3-inch chamber
BARREL:	18.5 inches
OA LENGTH:	36.38 inches
WEIGHT:	6.75 pounds (empty)
STOCK:	Adjustable synthetic
SIGHTS:	Front bead
ACTION:	Pump
FINISH:	Matte black
CAPACITY:	5+1
MSRP:	$754

500 Tactical L-Series Adjustable

For those who don't live by the mantra that "one size fits all," there is the Mossberg 500 Tactical L-Series Adjustable (#59819), which offers some flexibility in its black synthetic stock, which can be adjusted to six different length-of-pull positions to fit shooters of any stature. This 18.5-inch-barreled shotgun gives new meaning to the phrase "try one on for size."



SPECS

GAUGE:	12; 3-inch chamber
BARREL:	18.5 inches
OA LENGTH:	31-39.5 inches
WEIGHT:	5.75-6.75 pounds (empty)
STOCK:	Synthetic
SIGHTS:	Front bead
ACTION:	Pump
FINISH:	Matte black
CAPACITY:	5+1
MSRP:	$599

500 Tactical L-Series Cruiser

Available in 12 gauge, this is a mission-ready shotgun (#59817) that can be used with either a conventional buttstock or a pistol grip. In either configuration, this Mossberg 500 Tactical is reliable and rugged. It is a go-anywhere shotgun that can stand up to the elements and be ready when you need it.

SOUTHPAW SCATTERGUNS



SPECS

GAUGE:	12; 3-inch chamber
BARREL:	20 inches
OA LENGTH:	41 inches
WEIGHT:	7 pounds (empty)
STOCK:	Synthetic
SIGHTS:	Front bead
ACTION:	Pump
FINISH:	Matte black
CAPACITY:	7+1
MSRP:	$577

500 Tactical L-Series Persuader

Those who want the basics will find them in the Mossberg 500 Tactical L-Series Persuader (#59818), which features a conventional buttstock with a thick rubber recoil pad. It is a full 41 inches long so it can be handled more like a traditional long gun, and it offers a front bead for fast target acquisitions. It also has a 7+1 capacity for those times when you need plenty of 12-gauge firepower.



SPECS

GAUGE:	12; 3-inch chamber
BARREL:	18.5 inches
OA LENGTH:	28-38.5 inches
WEIGHT:	5.75-6.5 pounds (empty)
STOCK:	Synthetic
SIGHTS:	Front bead
ACTION:	Pump
FINISH:	Matte black
CAPACITY:	5+1
MSRP:	$599

500 Tactical L-Series Cruiser/Persuader

This particular Mossberg 500 Tactical (#59824) features a solid synthetic forend and stock, an 18.5-inch barrel and a fast-targeting front sight bead. This fast-handling model can use either a pistol grip or a full-sized stock, making it a great fit for close quarters. It offers the 500 series' renowned ruggedness with unparalleled versatility.



SPECS

GAUGE:	12; 3-inch chamber
BARREL:	20 inches
OA LENGTH:	41 inches
WEIGHT:	7.25 pounds (empty)
STOCK:	Synthetic
SIGHTS:	Front bead
ACTION:	Pump
FINISH:	Matte black
CAPACITY:	8+1
MSRP:	$691

590 L-Series 9-Shot

Soldiers in the field will often say you can't ever have enough sleep, enough food or enough ammo. The Mossberg 590 L-Series 9-Shot shotgun (#59816) can't help with the first two problems, but it offers extra capacity for those who want to go to the "nines." It measures 41 inches long overall yet weighs only a bit over 7 pounds. Another notable feature: A vented heat shield is installed over the barrel.



SPECS

GAUGE:	12; 3-inch chamber
BARREL:	20 inches
OA LENGTH:	41 inches
WEIGHT:	7 pounds (empty)
STOCK:	Synthetic
SIGHTS:	XS Ghost Ring
ACTION:	Pump
FINISH:	Matte black
CAPACITY:	8+1
MSRP:	$942

590A1 L-Series 9-Shot

The 590A1 remains the only pump shotgun to pass the U.S. Army's MIL-S-3443 requirements, and it has served in multiple branches of the U.S. military for more than a quarter century. The new left-handed version (#59815) offers everything its right-handed twin offers, including a heavy-walled barrel. It was designed for the harshest of environments and features a Parkerized finish, a metal triggerguard and safety button, an extended magazine capacity and an easy-to-clean magazine tube. SW

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STORY & PHOTOS BY SEAN UTLEY

In 2011, Lewis Machine & Tool (LMT) introduced a 7.62x51mm NATO weapon designed to aid the designated marksman in his role. The LMT Modular Weapon System (MWS) hit hard and fast, and though there were similar offerings from other manufacturers, the MWS seemed to be the golden child in the eyes of the masses. Prior to its U.S. introduction, the British adopted the LM308MWS variant of the system as the L129A1 in 2010. This was more than likely responsible for the rock-star popularity of the LMT system. It came with a 16-inch, stainless steel barrel with a 1-in-11.25-inch twist rate. Though a 1-in-10-inch twist version was also available, the slower twist rate was more desirable, probably due to its British-adopted specs. The platform was (and still is) very accurate, producing consistent sub-MOA accuracy in most cases. At the time, sources within LMT rumored effective ranges out to 1,100 yards were possible with that setup.

Since its introduction, the MWS has gone through some changes, and several iterations are available with various features that allow these rifles to fill the needs of the military, federal agencies, law enforcement officers and civilians alike. One of the most notable changes in features was the monolithic upper receiver/rail system that once utilized a quad-rail system. The latest iterations from LMT, now dubbed the LM8MWS series, do away with quad-rails and feature "slick" forends with mounting points for rail sections where deemed necessary by the end-user.

Lewis Machine & Tool's innovative Modular Weapon System (MWS) has evolved into the LM8MWSLTFDE, a lightweight big bore for today's warfighters. Shown with a Nightforce ATACR scope and an Atlas bipod.

"The profile of the barrel was changed in a way that cut weight but did not affect the excellent accuracy and endurance the platform has historically produced."



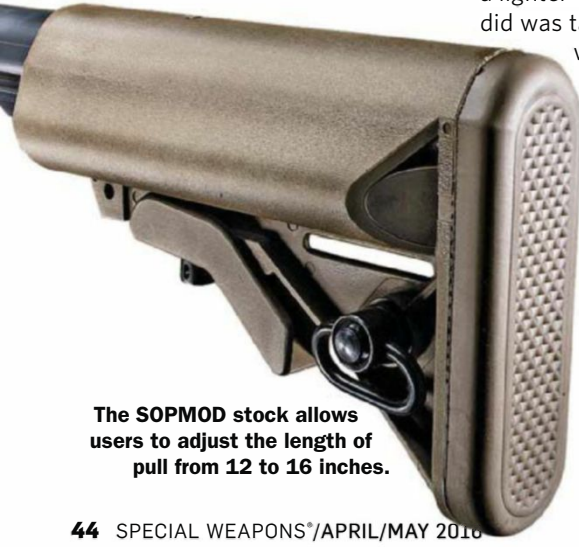






1. The LM8MWSLTFDE comes with an ambidextrous safety with easy-to-see markings on both sides of the receiver. 2. The test rifle came with a 16-inch, 7.62mm NATO barrel with an A2-style flash suppressor installed. 3. Users can swap out barrel assemblies by simply removing two screws at the rear of the handguard. 4. Note the ambidextrous magazine release and large, paddle-style bolt release.

Continuing its legacy as a serious contender and an all around battle-proven platform, the LM8MWS has undergone yet another upgrade. In early 2015, LMT released the LM8MWSLTFDE. As that's a letter-heavy designation, I will refer to it simply as the "MWS Lightweight" for the remainder of this text. The MWS Lightweight is, just as the name implies, a lighter version of the MWS. "What we did was take the L129A1 and reduce the weight," Mathew Pruit, the director of sales and marketing for LMT, said. In fact, a pound has been taken off the weapon—an impressive feat. Of course, this begs the question as to how LMT was able to remove weight from the platform.



The SOPMOD stock allows users to adjust the length of pull from 12 to 16 inches.

Where It Counts

In conversations with Pruitt, he explained why and how the company reduced the weight. A few international tenders made the request for a lighter weapon with other specifications as well. One tender requested that the weapon be less than 9.5 pounds without any accessories or magazines. I weighed the MWS Lightweight when it was completely stripped of all accessories, including the minimalist grip panels, which wouldn't even register on my scale by themselves. A weight of 9.3 pounds flashed on the screen, proving that LMT met the requested goal.

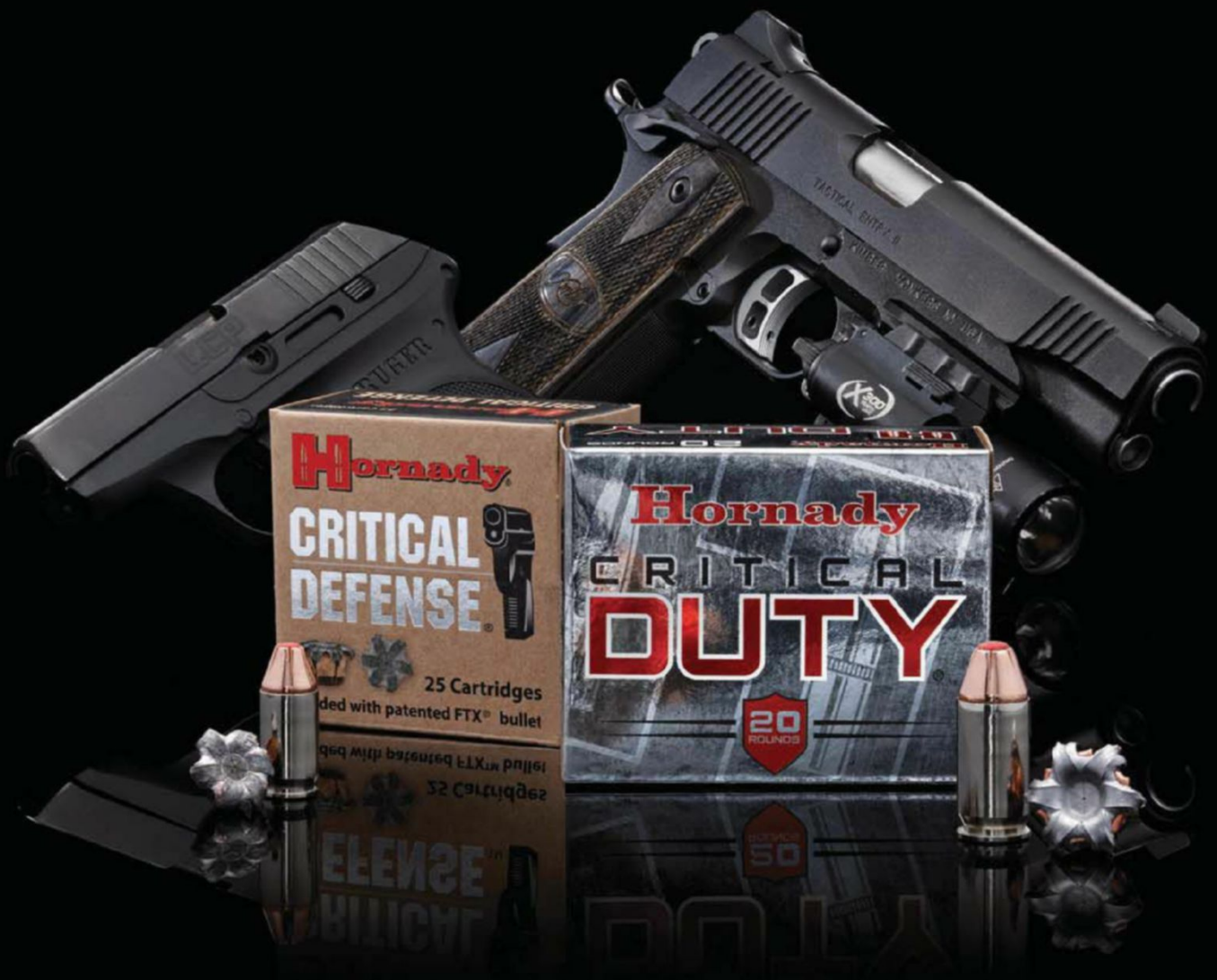
Pruitt explained that in order to remove over a pound of weight from the platform, a couple of changes were made. The profile of the barrel was changed in a way that cut weight but did not affect the excellent accuracy and endurance the platform has historically produced. The barrel extension received changes as well. The extension material was changed along with other modifications. "This particular weapon made directly for a tender included milled rails, a lightened stainless steel barrel and an FDE Cerakote finish with IR signature-reduction capabilities." You read that correctly. The military version is coated with an IR signature-reducing FDE finish. The civilian version lacks the IR reduction properties, but it's an equally attractive Cerakote finish.

The modifications also extend into other parts of the weapon. As a confirmation of LMT's commitment to adapt to end-user needs, changes were also made to the length of pull (LOP). A client specifically stated the need for an LOP with at least 4 inches of travel. The minimum LOP when collapsed needed to be 12 inches and a maximum of 16 inches or longer when extended.

Reaching Out

Another feature LMT addressed was the sights. The rifle can come with LMT's new L8BUIS308 flip-type backup iron sights. These sights are designed specifically for the rifle-length rail (or 19.25 inches of Picatinny rail space) on the .308 platform. Though

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"The LMT Lightweight proved to be extremely accurate. It's a platform that you can buy and pretty much rest assured that it will always outperform you."



The modular forend features a long Picatinny top rail while the sides and bottom are drilled and tapped for adding accessory rails. Also note the lightening cuts.



The LM8MWSLTFDE comes with a matching Flat Dark Earth tactical charging handle that is reinforced for surefire reliability in tough battlefield conditions.

we live in the days of mostly optics-only shooting, whether magnified or simply red-dot type, operators in the field made the observation that their shots were coming up short when using backup sights, especially at extended ranges. That's because typical backup sights are designed for use on carbine-length rails. LMT addressed this with sights designed for the rifle-length rail and specifically calculated them for use with 7.62mm NATO projectiles out to 800 yards. As you would expect, these are rugged sights but feature flexible resistance in case the sights make contact with hard objects. They will flex a little and maintain their upright position but will also close completely when under high pressure. The sights feature a clutch that allows for the closure to happen. There is also a detent that, when pressed, opens the clutch and allows the sights to fold easily. The rear sight can be adjusted for windage in 0.25-MOA increments and in 0.5-MOA increments for elevation. There are two rear apertures, course and fine, measuring 0.125 and 0.0625 inches respectively. While these sights don't come standard on the MWS Lightweight, they can be had for a small $40 upcharge. They are well worth it, in my opinion.

The rest of the MWS Lightweight is pure LMT and its winning combination of modularity and reliability. This modularity resides within its free-floating barrel, which is easy to install and remove. Barrels of various lengths and chamberings can be fitted to the MWS receiver, including those in 6.5 Creedmoor, .260 Remington, .243 Winchester and 7mm-08. The 7.62mm/.308 barrel is available in two twist rates (1-in-11.25-inch and 1-in-10-inch), and in a 13.5-inch length as well. Keep in mind that all NFA rules apply to this shorter length. These barrels come in either stainless steel or chrome-lined versions.

LMT's lower receivers feature ambidextrous controls for the magazine release and safety. As a southpaw shooter, I appreciate these merits. If you are one of those shooters who finds it difficult to actuate the ambidextrous safety, a single-sided version can be installed. The LM308MWS lower features LMT's own two-stage trigger. It has a light take-up on the first stage and breaks cleanly on the second stage. The trigger is actually quite nice, although I prefer single-stage triggers. Interestingly, LMT's triggers are electronically tested and recorded. The lower also features LMT's popular SOPMOD buttstock and a specially designed Ergo pistol grip. Internal features include LMT's mil-spec semi-auto bolt carrier group and tactical charging handle.

While the LMT is a formidable weapon, it needed only a couple of

SPECS

LMT LM8MWSLTFDE	
Caliber:	7.62mm NATO
Barrel:	16 inches
OA Length:	35-38 inches
Weight:	9.3 pounds
Stock:	Collapsible
Sights:	None
Action:	Semi-auto
Finish:	Flat Dark Earth Cerakote
Capacity:	20+1
MSRP:	$3,300

things to make it complete for testing purposes. I added a 4-16x42mm Nightforce ATACR F1 scope featuring a Horus H59 reticle. I think this is one of the best reticles available. This reticle, coupled with the beautiful glass of the Nightforce scope, makes for a great long-range shooting session. The Nightforce ATACR features large, well-marked turrets with excellent, positive clicks and movement. Though it is only a 42mm objective, plenty of quality light is transmitted through the 34mm tube. The ATACR features Nightforce's ZeroStop technology, which allows for rapid elevation adjustments.

PERFORMANCE

LMT LM8MWSLTFDE

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
SSA 168 HPBT	2,490	0.68
Gorilla 175 SMK	2,414	0.74
Federal 168 Gold Medal Match	2,394	0.45

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in fps by chronograph, and accuracy in inches for three 5-shot groups.

Performance

The LMT MWS Lightweight proved to be extremely accurate. It's a platform that you can buy and pretty much rest assured that it will always outperform you. It was comfortable to shoot and not abusive in any manner. My best five-shot group of the day was produced by Silver State Armory's 168-grain HPBT. I managed a 0.45-inch group with this load, and four of the five shots clustered into 0.3 inches. All of the test loads tested produced comfortably sub-MOA groups.

As you might expect, there were no malfunctions or issues with the LMT rifle. Removing and replacing the barrel was a breeze as well, which, coupled with its outstanding accuracy, makes it a bit easier to swallow the $3,300 price tag. No, that's not cheap, but it's in line with other platforms of this quality and caliber. And the LMT comes with the knowledge that it is being used in theater and that the company is continually developing the system to suit the needs of operators. In short, the LMT LM8MWSLTFDE is an excellent rifle and deserves serious consideration if you are in the market for such a system. For more information, visit lmtdefense.com or call 309-787-7151. SW



The LM8MWSLTFDE is built to withstand harsh extremes. The semi-auto bolt carrier group features a hardened bolt with a properly staked gas key.



GUN TEST

ROCK



The new LAR-15 NSP CAR is an all-business 5.56mm NATO AR packed with several of Rock River Arms' polymer NSP components, including a reliable 30-round magazine. Shown with a Trijicon MRO sight.

SOLID

With everything you need and nothing you don't, the ROCK RIVER ARMS NSP CAR delivers!

BY DR. MARTIN D. TOPPER • PHOTOS BY ALEX LANDEEN

The new LAR-15 NSP CAR from Rock River Arms (RRA) is a well-made and competitively priced AR carbine that's bound to attract interest in today's crowded AR-15 market. This rifle has just about every feature someone would want without being weighed down by extraneous bells and whistles. On the other hand, this "no-frills" carbine is not a stripped-down gun that will need major modifications to mount accessories. Combine all of this with RRA's reputation for reliability and accuracy, and you wind up with a lot of gun for the money.

No Nonsense

The NSP is a no-nonsense gun just like the M16 I qualified with in 1966. Both are lightweight, well balanced, have a straightforward manual of arms and are easy to take apart and maintain. Many of today's high-end ARs are just the opposite. They're weighed down with bulky quad-rails, heavy piston-driven gas systems and all sorts of accessories that often increase these rifles' overall weight by at least a couple of pounds and make them decidedly muzzle-heavy. Piston systems also need to be disassembled and cleaned, making maintenance more complicated. To be fair, piston-driven guns do run cooler and their chambers stay cleaner, but most homeowners and police officers are unlikely to fire a thousand or more rounds without cleaning their guns or letting them cool off. So, for the average user, simpler is better.

Even though the NSP isn't a fancy gun, it's well made and has some nice features. The upper and lower receivers are forged from mil-spec 7075-T6 aluminum

"Rock River's LAR-15 NSP CAR is a lightweight, reliable, well-made and accurate AR carbine that is ready for duty right out of the box."





Rock River Arms ships the LAR-15 NSP CAR with a set of polymer backup sights that are spring-loaded, meaning they'll flip up in an instant when deployed. The carbine's long top rail makes it easy to add optics as well, including the Trijicon MRO (shown).



RRA's streamlined NSP CAR stock offers a solid cheekweld and can be adjusted to six different length-of-pull positions.

that is then hardcoat anodized. The flattop upper has a full-length Picatinny rail for mounting optics. There's also a rail on top of the gas block that will accommodate a front sight or a miniature light/laser. The non-free-floating, 16-inch barrel is fluted to dissipate heat and help reduce weight. The barrel is also hand-lapped at the factory so it doesn't need to be broken in. RRA states that the rifle will deliver 1-MOA accuracy with appropriate loads, which is very good since the NSP does not have a free-floating handguard. The muzzle end has a Rock River Operator muzzle brake that is very effective. Even though 5.56mm NATO loads don't kick much, the brake's recoil reduction is noticeable when shooting quickly.



The fluted, 16-inch, chrome-moly barrel comes equipped with RRA's highly effective Operator muzzle brake to help tame recoil and muzzle rise.

SPECS

RRA LAR-15 NSP CAR	
Caliber:	5.56mm NATO
Barrel:	16 inches
OA Length:	33.75-37.25 inches
Weight:	7 pounds (empty)
Stock:	NSP CAR
Sights:	Flip-up front and rear
Action:	Direct impingement semi-auto
Finish:	Matte black
Capacity:	30+1
MSRP:	$1,120

The LAR-15 NSP's fire control system is also top-notch. The carbine's two-stage trigger breaks cleanly at 4.5 pounds. That is quite good compared to the 7-pound triggers on many other ARs. In addition, the magazine release, safety selector and bolt release all operate crisply and positively.

To keep the NSP light, RRA makes substantial use of polymer in its construction. The polymer handguard, magazine, buttstock and flip-up sights are produced to RRA's specifications. The handguard has a solid feel. It has permanent Picatinny rails on the top and bottom, and two short rail segments are included for mounting lights and/or lasers on the sides. The buttstock offers six adjustment positions and a wide cheekpiece. I was impressed with the stock's diagonal bottom edge, which fits like a conventional stock in a rifle rest. This made it much easier to shoot precisely from the bench. The flip-up sights are more substantial than many other polymer sights. They are held securely in place by spring pressure, and when folded, they sit low enough so that a scope can be mounted above the rear sight. The front sight is hand-adjustable for elevation, which is much easier than having to use a sight adjustment tool, and the rear sight is adjustable for windage. Overall, the NSP is a very easy rifle to work with, which is just what the average shooter needs.

Having a straightforward functional design is good, but a rifle also has to be well made. The exterior looked good and all of the safeties and controls worked well when I picked the LAR-15 NSP CAR up at the Florida Gun Exchange. Later on I field-stripped it and thoroughly checked its exterior and interior, looking for scratches, tool marks, uneven lines, burrs, sharp edges and any other signs of poor manufacture. The charging handle and bolt operated smoothly and locked up tightly. The bolt never failed to go back into battery when the handle was drawn back and released. In addition, the bolt locked open every time on an empty magazine. Magazines also inserted easily, locked firmly in place and dropped free when the magazine release was pressed. The stock locked firmly in all four length-of-pull positions. There was a minimal amount of side-to-side play in the adjustable stock

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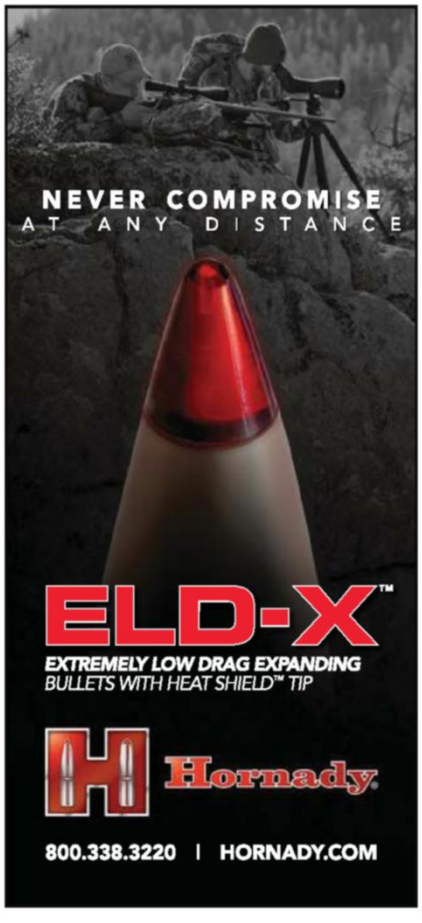
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ROCK RIVER ARMS LAR-15 NSP CAR

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
Black Hills 50 TSX	3,205	1.87
Black Hills 69 SMK	2,615	1.30
Hornady 55 GMX	2,940	1.42
Liberty 55 Silverado	2,940	1.29

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in fps by chronograph, and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 100 yards.

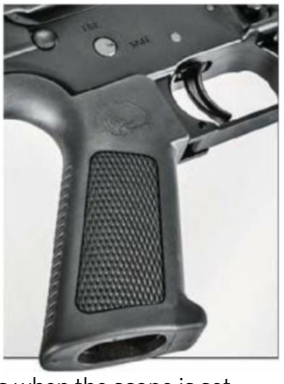
and even less play in the LAR-15 NSP's two-piece polymer handguard.

Seeing Clearly

The NSP has plenty of places to mount a wide variety of accessories. This versatility allowed me to move the front sight back a few notches on the handguard's upper rail so I could put an Insight Procyon light on top of the gas block. Mounting the light on the gas block minimizes the offset between the lines of the bore, light and sights. The gas block's top rail is a good place for a light or light/laser combination—provided that the rifle's iron or optical sights are mounted high enough so that the light does not unduly compromise the sight's field of view. The folding sights are useful as they can be used as backups if the scope is damaged and removed. However, it is important to re-zero the iron sights if they are removed from the rifle and then replaced to ensure accuracy.

The scope I chose for the NSP was a Leupold 1.5-4x20mm Mark AR MOD 1. It has a duplex crosshair that allows quick target engagements at CQB distances when the scope is set at low power, and also lets the shooter hit targets out to 300 meters when the scope is set accordingly. Three hundred meters is a good practical range for typical 5.56mm NATO and .223 Remington ammunition because of the relatively limited ballistic coefficients of most .224-caliber bullets. Therefore, a lower-power variable can be a good choice for tactical shooting with a 5.56mm. In addition, this particular scope's 20mm objective lens and low magnification give it a very large exit pupil for maximum light transmission in low-light conditions.





RIGHT: The test rifle exhibited a superior fit and finish, with smooth hardcoat anodizing and easy-to-use controls.

FAR RIGHT: RRA outfits the lower with its NSP Overmolded pistol grip as well as a two-stage trigger with a 4.5-pound pull.

Shots Fired

Four loads were provided by their manufacturers for this evaluation. They included Liberty Ammunition's 55-grain .223 Remington Silverado fragmenting copper HP, Hornady's 55-grain .223 Remington Superformance GMX, Black Hills' all-copper 50-grain 5.56mm NATO Barnes TSX and Black Hills' 69-grain .223 Remington MatchKing. I fired three 5-shot groups with each of the loads at 100 yards, and I used the 69-grain MatchKing load to fire two 5-shot groups at 200 yards and two groups at 300 meters at the Volusia County Gun & Hunt Club range. The Liberty Silverado load just barely bested the Black Hills MatchKing ammo with a best group at 100 yards measuring just 1.29 inches. The average 100-yard groups were all under 2.13 inches, and the overall average for all of the groups at 100 yards was 1.67 inches. At 200 yards, the group average was 3.2 inches, and it was 5.49 inches at 300 meters. Given the gusting 4- to 8-mph crosswinds, this is very acceptable performance for a tactical rifle shooting .224-inch-diameter bullets.

To measure each load's velocity, I fired five shots over a Competition Electronics chronograph. The fastest load was the 50-grain 5.56mm NATO load from Black Hills. At 3,205 fps, it produced 1,140 foot-pounds of energy (fpe) at the muzzle. All of the other .223 Remington loads produced between 1,047 and 1,055 fpe. This is good performance for both the 5.56mm and .223 cartridges from a 16-inch carbine barrel.

Complete Package

Rock River's LAR-15 NSP CAR is a lightweight, reliable, well-made and accurate AR carbine that is ready for duty right out of the box. Its configuration allows many different accessories to be added, and its MSRP of only $1,120 makes it a good value for both new and established AR users. SW

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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McMillan's A3-5 stock is adjustable to fit most shooters and combines the best qualities of the company's most popular stock systems.

McMILLAN'S GRADE "A" STOCK

The Adjustable A3-5 stock will take your Remington 700's versatility to a whole new level.

BY DAVID BAHDE

Space-age rifle stocks have taken over the tactical world. It seems everyone today is offering modular aluminum stocks. Their prices range from under a grand to well over two. With adjustments galore, they accommodate pounds of accessories most shooters will never need. Often, a good old composite stock with simple adjustments for cheek height and length of pull is all you need.

Several companies still make composite stocks, but McMillan has been an industry leader for decades. The last duty rifle I deployed with was an FN SPR with a McMillan A5 stock. It's one of the most rugged and reliable rifles I've ever used, and it's still a tack-driving machine. Some of my older Remington 700-based custom rifles also wore McMillan stocks. The company's composite stocks are lightweight, strong, easy to fit and come in variety of shapes, sizes and colors. Properly installed, these stocks allow for precision, rugged reliability and simple operation—exactly what today's police countersnipers need.

I was recently looking for a stock for my 300 Blackout Remington 700 bolt-action rifle, and McMillan's Adjustable A3-5 stock seemed ideal for my personal requirements.

Adjustable A3-5

Over the years, two McMillan stocks have popped up a lot during precision rifle training courses: the A3 and the A5. The A5 remains popular with its wider and flatter forend, butt hook and deep-seated action, but the A3 is still the most widely used. It's lighter and offers a thinner, tapered forend. Designed to work well on sandbags, tripods or other supports, it is available with or without an adjustable comb. Both the A3 and A5 are adjustable for length of pull.

Well, McMillan took the best of both and made the Adjustable A3-5. This composite stock is a variation of the A3 stock but with the addition of an A5-type butt hook. The flat on the bottom of the hook is about 0.75 inches wide. This stock is only available with an adjustable cheekpiece that offers both vertical and horizontal adjustments and is available with either the standard or thumbwheel elevator system. The front sling stud is reinforced for bipod mounting, and flush quick-detach (QD) sling cups are molded into the left side at the front and rear as well as on the bottom.

The Adjustable A3-5 can be ordered without inletting or a basic or full inlet. My test stock came inletted for a Remington Model 700 short action using factory BDL bottom metal and included pillars. Several colors are available, and my stock came with an attractive olive, tan and black marble finish.

All Together

My Remington 700 SPS Tactical in 300 Blackout is a carryover from a gun review; it worked so well during testing that I bought it. Loaded with

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- Made in the U.S.A. from high quality, impact resistant polymers
- Available in Black, Flat Dark Earth, Foliage Green and Wolf Gray

BCMGUNFIGHTER VG-S - Short, Screw Mount Version $35.95
BCMGUNFIGHTER VG-S-KM - Short, KeyMod Version $39.95



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- Low-profile length for increased mobility and decreased "snag" factor
- The forward angle increases the rigidity of the forearm, while providing a more natural wrist angle
- Can be mounted in reverse angle to increase control when grabbing handguard and grip
- Flat sides with aggressive texture give better control to the shooter
- Anchor and bolt system offers a simple robust design, while maintaining a light-weight 1.9 ounces
- Made in the U.S.A. from high quality, impact resistant polymers
- Available in Black, Flat Dark Earth, Foliage Green and Wolf Gray

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The Adjustable A3-5 features a lower "hook" (above) to keep the stock locked into your shoulder. This particular stock was cut for Seekins Precision's bottom metal (right), allowing for use with any AICS-compatible box magazine.

125-grain supersonic ammunition, the rifle offers significant penetration in a small package. It's accurate without producing much recoil. It also works well with subsonic ammunition and serves as a great practice rifle at 200 yards and closer. Some of its upgrades include Seekins Precision's AICS bottom metal, which features an ambidextrous magazine release, a Timney flat trigger and safety, and a SureFire WARCOMP 762 flash suppressor, which helps reduce muzzle rise and accepts SureFire SOCOM sound suppressors. Ernie Bray at Red Creek Tactical helped me install and bed the barreled action in the McMillan stock.

For optics, I installed a Trijicon 1-6x24mm AccuPoint scope that uses a mil-dot crosshair reticle on the 20-MOA rail. A dial on top of the scope helps adjust the illuminated reticle, which is mounted in the second focal plane. This is a rugged optic offering plenty of adjustments and crystal-clear glass.

At the range, the Remington 700's accuracy was noticeably improved with the McMillan stock installed. My five-shot groups measured right around an inch with 125-grain match ammunition from Gorilla Ammunition and PNW Arms. Barnes' 90-grain range ammunition grouped in the 1.5-inch range. I also used some 120-grain Barnes TAC-TX and Gemtech 125-grain Nosler rounds, which proved perfect for short-range deployments due to their accuracy. The consistency also improved. The rifle was very solid in this stock, and the results were impressive, especially considering that it's a factory action.

The rifle also ran reliably. Magazines ejected smoothly and bolt manipulations were fast. Brass ejected with authority. In short, the rifle was fast, accurate and flat-out fun.

Pinpoint Precision

Using the McMillan Adjustable A3-5 stock reminded me of why I loved the A5 in the first place. These stocks allow you to get very low to the ground, and the butt hook locks you into the gun. The A3-5 is lightweight while still being rock solid and well balanced. Once adjusted, the cheekpiece never moved. The forend worked well on barricades and against obstacles, remaining flat and stable. Shooting from prone with a rear bag was a cinch, and it was easy to adjust the length of pull by adding spacers as needed. This adjustment system is simple and reliable—there's less to go wrong.

My original intent was to re-barrel this rifle after completing this test, but now I'm not going to touch it. Mating the Seekins Precision AICS to the McMillan stock resulted in a fantastic little rifle, and it is going to stay intact. It will make a perfect practice rifle and test bed for many projects to come.

McMillan has done a great job with this stock. Over the years, many shooters have clamored for a hybrid of the A3 and the A5, and the company has come through with flying colors. Whether it's for your next custom build or duty rifle, make sure you give the Adjustable A3-5 stock a very close look. For more information, visit mcmillanusa.com or call 877-365-6148. SW

"Over the years, many shooters have clamored for a hybrid of the A3 and the A5, and the company has come through with flying colors."

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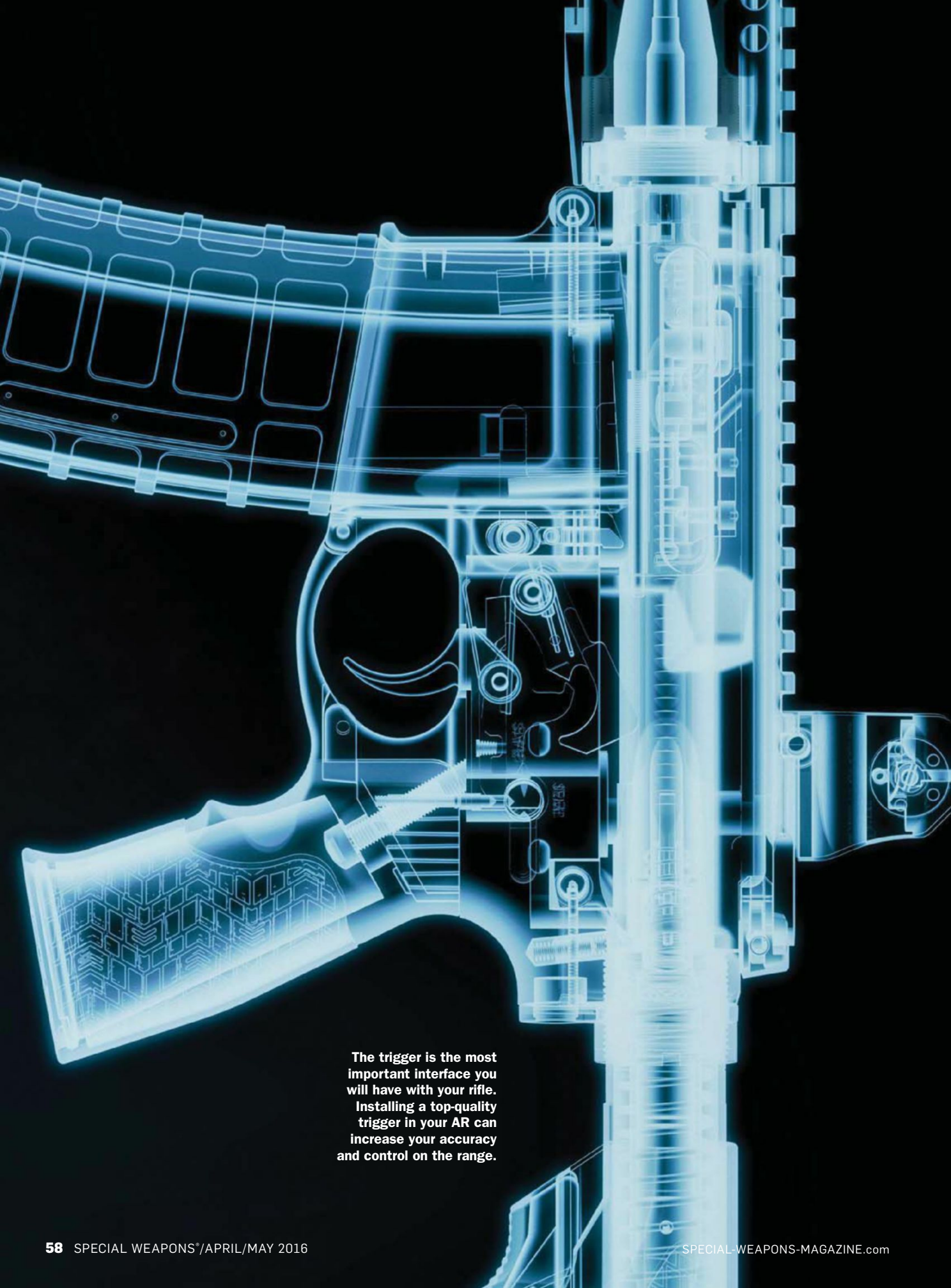
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The trigger is the most important interface you will have with your rifle. Installing a top-quality trigger in your AR can increase your accuracy and control on the range.

TRIGGER TIME

DIAL IN YOUR AR'S PRECISION WITH THESE EASY-TO-INSTALL AFTERMARKET TRIGGER KITS!

BY DAVE NORMAN

You probably don't appreciate your AR's trigger the way you should, and certainly not the way you will after seeing the purpose-designed options out there. I didn't either until I really dug into this research. It's no secret that dozens of companies make countless versions of the exact same components of AR-pattern rifles, or that among those confusing options are many different flavors of basically the same thing. But in the world of triggers, there is a range of truly different designs unlike anything that exists for other basic components of the rifle.

Let's get familiar with a few trigger options to sample the range of designs and maybe find a model that will transform your experience with your rifle. That's a big goal, but replacing your trigger can actually make an astounding difference.

It's a confusing world, but we spent considerable time making a functional sort of sense of it for you, and we hope these samples—of the hundreds available—contain some things you didn't know about AR-pattern trigger design—and maybe an option that'll help with your style of shooting.

BRAVO COMPANY PNT

Designed to be 100-percent compatible with mil-spec AR lowers, the new BCM PNT trigger assembly is ready for action. Precision machined from AISI8620 investment casting, the PNT trigger and hammer is heat treated in a three-step process and hardened for durability. It features hand-polished sear engagement to reduce friction and enhance smoothness, and an electroless nickel finish further reduces friction in the trigger pull. The result is an American-made trigger assembly that is ready to serve in your preferred AR-platform firearm. (bravocompanyusa.com; 877-272-8626)



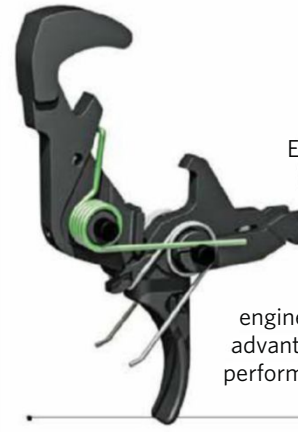
Photo Courtesy Daniel Defense

"The result is an American-made trigger assembly that is ready to serve in your preferred AR-platform firearm."

ELFTMANN TACTICAL ELF X-2

This radical trigger is a cassette-style affair that drops into mil-spec lower receivers and utilizes aircraft-grade "needle bearings" around the trigger and hammer pins to provide extremely smooth, low-drag operation. Most notably, it represents the rare double-finger trigger design and comes with a new triggerguard that accommodates its extra length (so, your receiver must have a removable triggerguard). The longer blade allows greater control over the adjustable trigger, as the same 2.75 to 4 pounds of pressure are applied via a longer lever with a greater length of pull at the bottom than at the top for taking precise shots—and clever shooters can "walk" two fingers on the trigger to achieve a rate of fire faster than yanking with just one finger on a traditional trigger. (elftmanntactical.com; 602-773-9159)



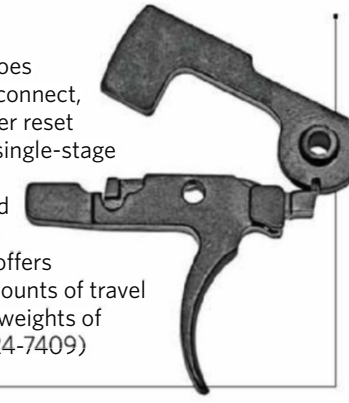


HIPERFIRE HIPERTOUCH EDT2

The Enhanced Duty Trigger 2 (EDT2) is a refinement of HIPERFIRE's previous EDT design, and allows users to swap between 4.5- and 5.5-pound springs. The hammer is bulkier than the previous hammer, so the added mass ensures reliable ignition of large .308/7.62mm rifle primers. Its engineering also gives additional mechanical advantage to the hammer, aiding in trigger performance. (hiperfire.com; 651-762-2800)

JARD AR MST

The engineering on the AR MST does away with the traditional trigger disconnect, which also does away with the trigger reset "slap" feeling in combat triggers. A single-stage affair, the AR MST features a gracefully curved combat-style trigger and overall unit geometry that promotes an extremely short trigger pull that offers virtually no overtravel—just safe amounts of travel resistance, adjustable with variable weights of trigger springs. (jardinc.com; 712-324-7409)



ARMALITE TACTICAL TWO-STAGE

Armalite's Tactical Two-Stage Trigger Set is a mil-spec-style replacement that breaks at around 8 pounds, with the first stage taking up 3 pounds of pressure and the second stage taking up the balance of around 5 pounds of pressure. Armalite's service department can install the components for you if you ship them your receiver, but installing the trigger kit is straightforward enough for those who follow the included instructions. An added feature of the two-stage trigger is an adjustable pull that can be tuned by the user without the need for gunsmithing tools. This, combined with little or no creep and positive stage break points, make the Armalite a boon for hunters or LEOs who appreciate a two-stage trigger. (armalite.com; 800-336-0184)





ELFTMANN TACTICAL ELF 3-GUN

This trigger is designed to offer high-end competitors a particularly smooth trigger that is adjustable without removing the trigger unit from the rifle. The hammer and trigger pivot around their retaining pins on aircraft-grade, fully enclosed "sealed bearings"—like a ball bearing bushing—rather than simply rotating around the fixed pin. This greatly decreases drag, and the sealed bearings decrease the chance of dirt, oil or other materials fouling the bearing surface and slowing down or adding drag to the components' functions. The skeletonized triggers are available in traditional curved or straight blade styles. The unit is a "cassette style" trigger group, meaning that it drops in and comes out as a unit with no fitting required. The housing is made of aircraft-grade aluminum, with hardened steel components inside. (elftmanntactical.com; 602-773-9159)



GENETICS.



ONLY $599 MSRP

The FNS-9 is a polymer-framed, striker-fired 9mm, with a 4" cold hammer-forged barrel and polished feed ramp. It features fully ambidextrous controls, a loaded chamber indicator, smooth trigger safety, a crisp, audible-resetting trigger, 1913 picatinny rail, and three 17-round magazines. See it at **FNAMERICA.COM**.

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LARUE TACTICAL MBT-2S

The two-stage MBT-2S trigger from LaRue was purposefully designed and manufactured for reliability and durability, with all of the major components precision-machined from S7 tool steel. The result of this extra effort is a consistent, glass-smooth trigger that will satisfy even the most scrupulous competition shooter, while being overly rugged for the battlefield. Made in Texas, the MBT-2S can replace the stock trigger on any mil-spec AR lower receiver. It breaks crisply with a 2.5-pound first stage and a 2-pound second stage. (laruetactical.com; 512-259-1585)





PATRIOT ORDNANCE FACTORY EFP 2

The EFP stands for "Enhanced Finger Placement," and the "2" designation sets this model apart by having the trigger located more rearward to accommodate a gloved finger. The trigger's unique shape encourages the trigger finger to find a low, repeatable position for maximum leverage and control, which also promotes a smoother feel for the pull. The components are hardened to a Rockwell hardness of 70, and the unit comes with KNS Precision anti-walk pins. (pof-usa.com; 623-561-9572)

TRIDENT 4-POUND TACTICAL TRIGGER

The 4-Pound Tactical Trigger Parts Kit from Trident Trigger is a single-stage design with a curved blade and a non-adjustable pull weight of 4 pounds. It's designed to look like a mil-spec unit but with a cleaner pull and a positive reset. The full-power springs and hammer ensure optimum reliability. Every trigger is measured, hand-tuned and tested using Trident's stringent quality control process before being shipped. (tridenttrigger.com; 530-558-8010)





RRA TWO-STAGE MATCH TRIGGER KIT

The Two-Stage Match Trigger Kit from Rock River Arms (RRA) offers a budget-friendly price for those who want to put a two-stage trigger on their duty, hobby or competition ARs. The light first stage of a two-stage trigger makes the heavier second stage not feel as heavy—if you take up the first 2 pounds during the first stage, adding the last 3 pounds only feel like having a 3-pound trigger pull. This unit accomplishes that with this solid, no-frills kit. (rockriverarms.com; 866-980-7625)



TIMNEY AR-15 COMPETITION

A staple aftermarket trigger with competitive rifle shooters, the Timney AR-15 Competition is a drop-in trigger system that utilizes an aircraft-grade aluminum block (anodized gold, no less) to hold the trigger, disconnect and hammer in alignment, and it utilizes the hammer and trigger pins to hold the cassette in your receiver. Several hex-head screws allow you to adjust the overtravel, though the trigger pull weight is fixed per model. (timneytriggers.com; 866-484-6639)



PATRIOT ORDNANCE FACTORY COMBAT

POF-USA's version of the combat trigger, these drop-in triggers are fixed (no adjustments required) to prevent creep or other problems. The Combat trigger is set to 5.5 pounds, the minimum mil-spec pull weight, suggesting its utility for police and military use where adherence to mil-spec is required while the benefits of aftermarket design are preferred. The major components are made of A2 steel that has been heat-treated to a Rockwell hardness of 70 for corrosion resistance and strength. Each unit ships with KNS Precision anti-walk pins for installation. (pof-usa.com; 877-561-9572)



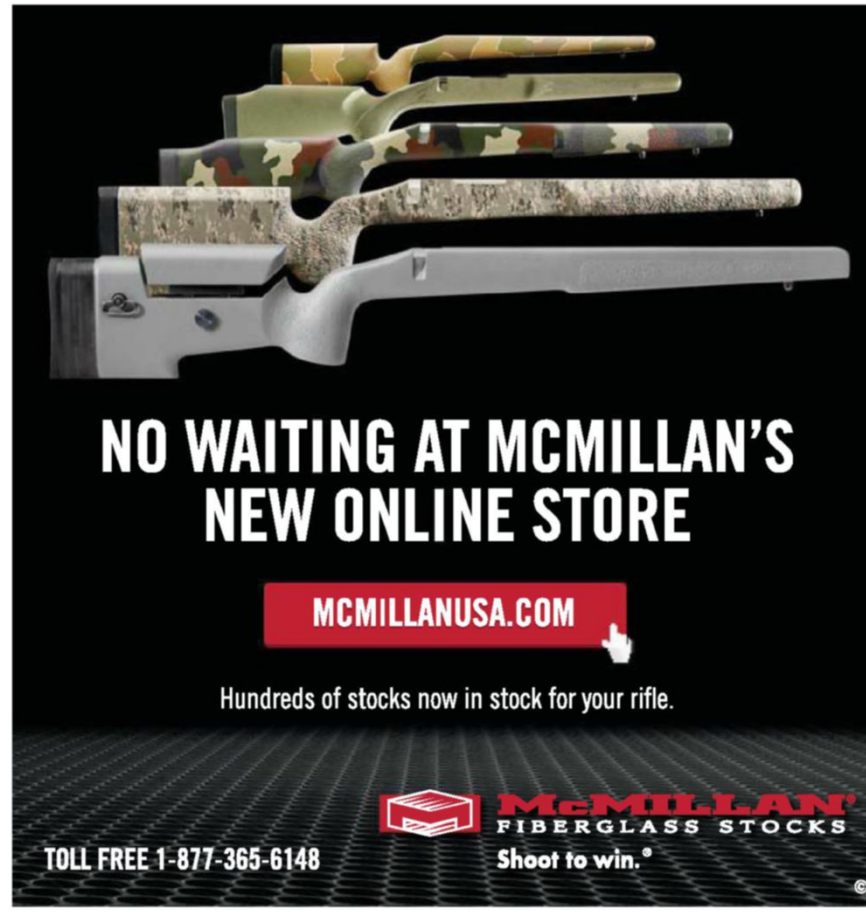
JARD AR TOP ADJUSTABLE

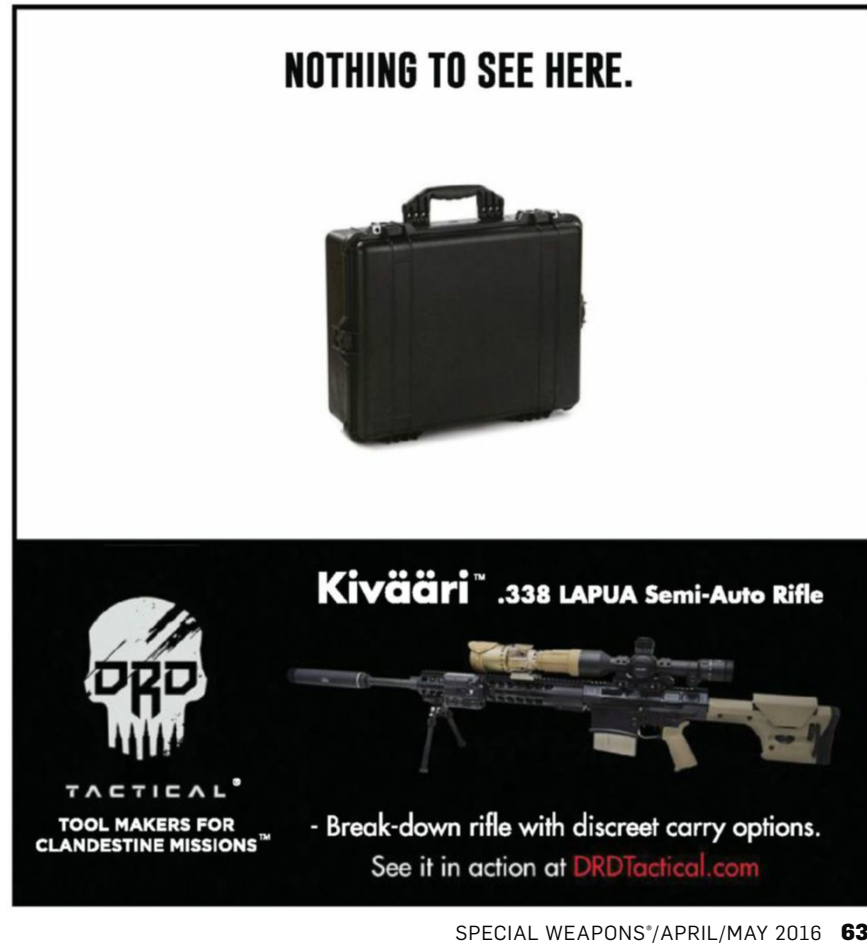
This unit is designed to offer sear engagement and overtravel adjustments that you can access from above, so that you don't have to remove any component to adjust the trigger—just disengage the rear receiver pin and pivot the upper receiver out of the way. Then you can easily access the adjustment bolt. You can order the AR Top Adjustable Trigger with a spring in your choice of six weights between 1.5 pounds and 5 pounds of resistance, and swap between them to adapt the trigger resistance to varying purposes—hunting, target shooting, law enforcement duty, etc. (jardinc.com; 712-324-7409)



RUGER ELITE 452 MSR TRIGGER

This two-stage trigger requires roughly 1.5 pounds of pressure through the first stage, with the balance of 4.5 pounds applied in the second stage with a full-power hammer spring, for a total that is below the mil-spec threshold. This recommends it for a competition or target rifle, or for hunting at long distances or for small animals. The loose components come pre-installed on a polymer grip that replicates the ergonomics of Ruger's AR-pattern rifle. This self-contained module is designed for safe dry firing, allowing you to get used to the two-stage feel of the new trigger through practice. You can even see exactly how the components are properly oriented to make reassembly a breeze. (ruger.com)







JP EZ FIRE CONTROL WITH ROLLER TRIGGER

The JP EZ Fire Control With Roller Trigger features a rolling surface on the trigger shoe that helps eliminate pulled shots. Essentially, the roller eliminates lateral force from the shooter's finger onto the trigger, which helps improve trigger control and accuracy downrange. The components include a reversible, customizable safety selector, and color-coded springs help you select between competition weights (below 4.5 pounds) and duty/National Match weights of 4.5 pounds and slightly above. Many springs are available separately from JP Enterprises, allowing you to customize your trigger and rifle as needed. (jprifles.com; 651-426-9196)



WILSON COMBAT TTU

Wilson Combat likes to keep its fine-tuned, match-grade products hearty enough for defensive use, walking that line between fine-tuning for precision and engineering tolerances to accommodate debris and abuse. Wilson Combat's approach to creating a cassette-style drop-in unit with the Tactical Trigger Unit (TTU) is to use heat-treated H13 steel for corrosion and wear resistance, and to eliminate any setscrews or adjustment screws so there's nothing to shoot loose over time or fall out of adjustment. It's a robust system that trades a bit of user adjustment for a lot of durability. (wilsoncombat.com; 870-545-3618)

TRIGGER GROUP PARTS

Those building an AR from scratch—nearly a rite of passage—can purchase a complete lower receiver to save a few steps in the building process or go completely authentic by buying the individual parts and completing the receiver themselves. This also offers you the chance to choose which trigger you want if you wish to stray from a standard mil-spec package.

Taking a look at the standard lower parts package offered by Daniel Defense (danieldefense.com) as an example, you'll see that the mil-spec trigger assembly comes in several pieces: the hammer (with the sear notch as a component of it), the trigger, the disconnect, the hammer spring, the trigger spring, and the hammer and trigger retaining pins. (The other components pictured are crucial but don't comprise the fire control system.)



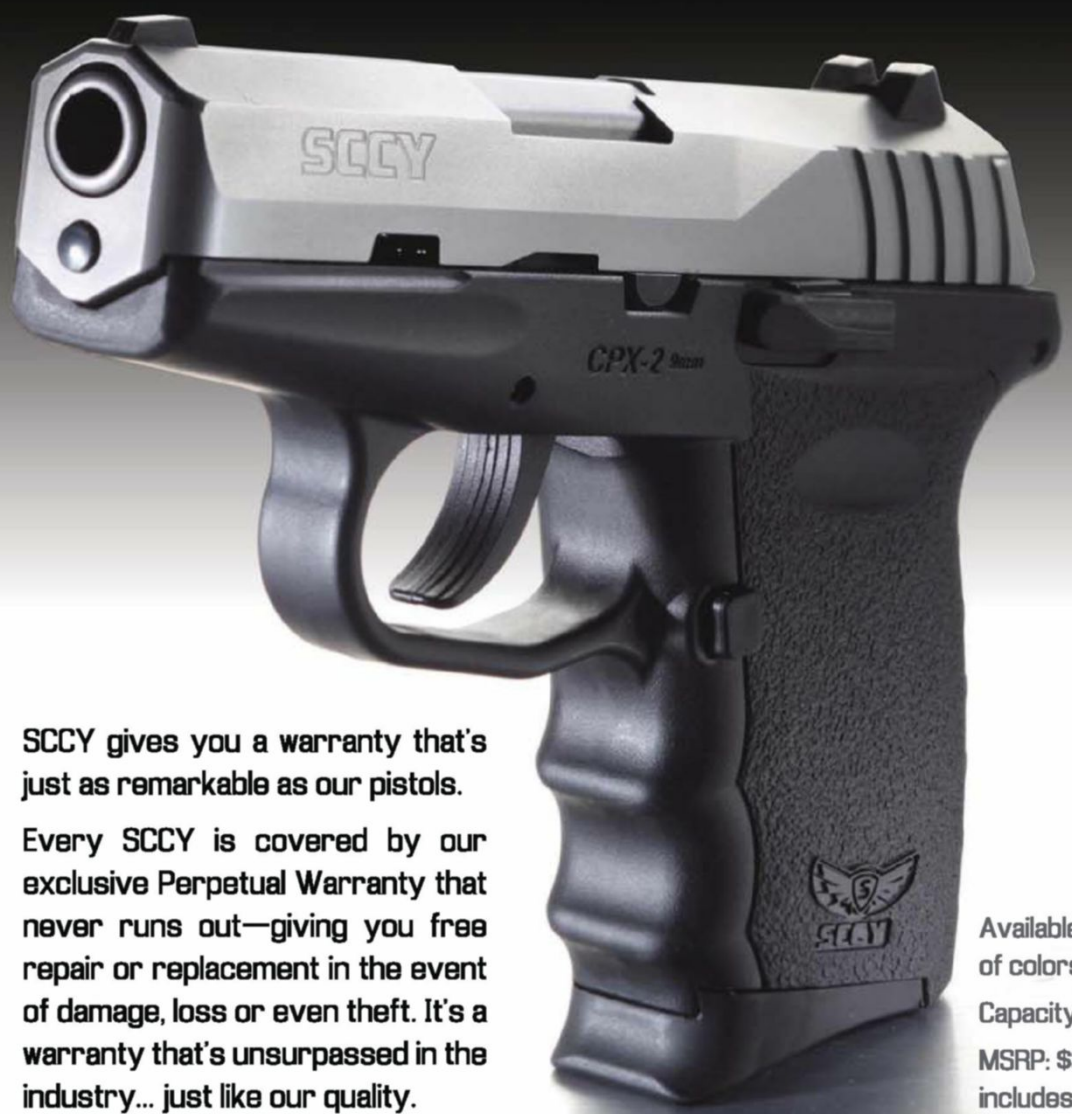
INSTALL BY HAND: Installing these individually is straightforward enough, and may require minor fitting with a file and polishing with a jewel cloth—the surfaces where the hammer engages the sear, and every accessible surface that rubs against the receiver. Many aftermarket triggers include these components of the fire control group, loose, giving you the opportunity to assemble and fit them as you need.

The competing approach, which many builders find easier to work with (though it makes cleaning and fitting them sometimes a bit harder), is to buy a fire control "cassette," which consists of a unit that contains all the parts. Just pin the complete unit in place with the trigger and hammer pins, and *voila*: It's installed and ready to go! SW

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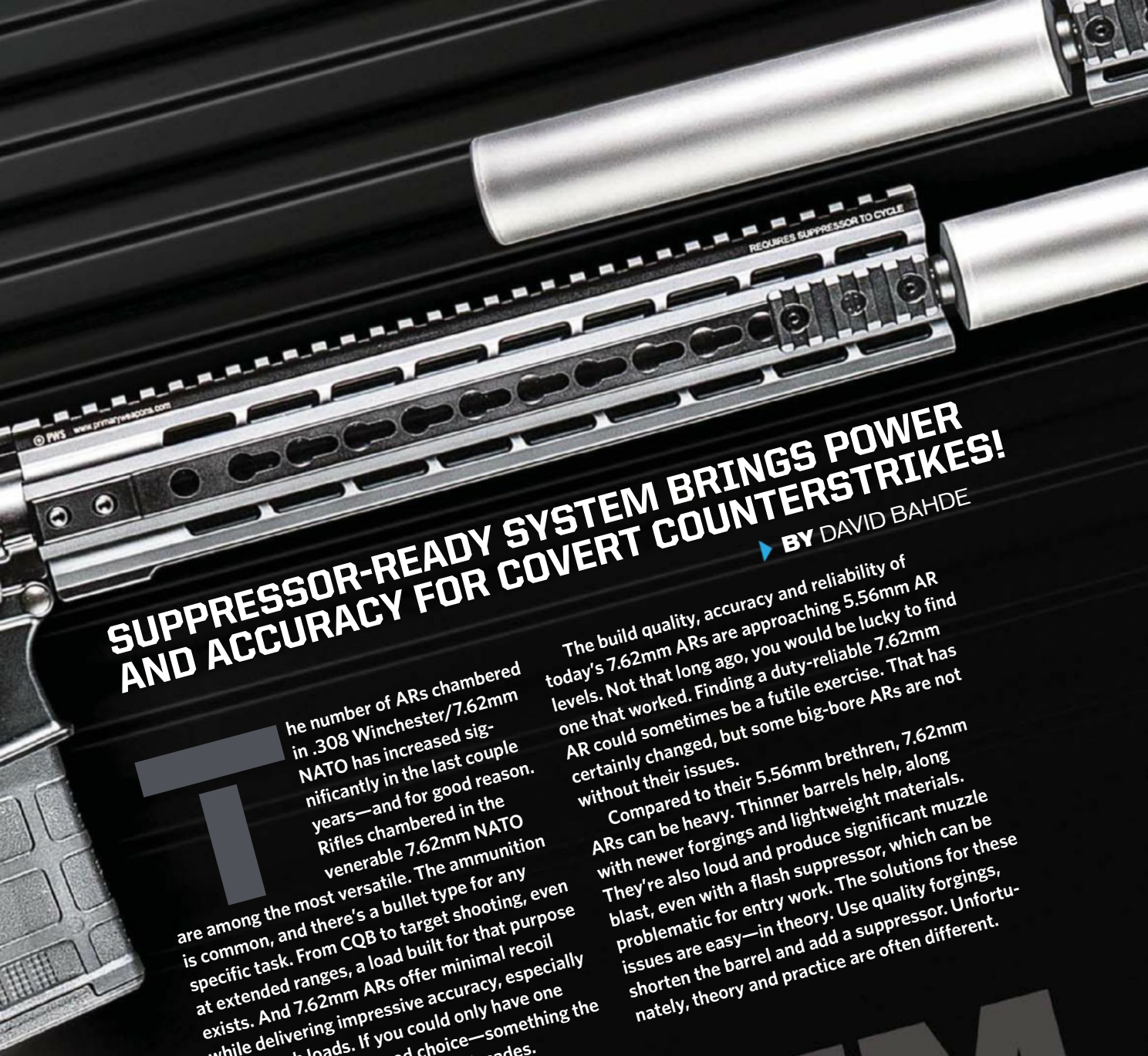
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PRIMARY WEAPONS SYSTEMS

PWS



MK212SD



SUPPRESSOR-READY SYSTEM BRINGS POWER AND ACCURACY FOR COVERT COUNTERSTRIKES!

BY DAVID BAHDE

The number of ARs chambered in .308 Winchester/7.62mm NATO has increased significantly in the last couple years—and for good reason. Rifles chambered in the venerable 7.62mm NATO are among the most versatile. The ammunition is common, and there's a bullet type for any specific task. From CQB to target shooting, even at extended ranges, a load built for that purpose exists. And 7.62mm ARs offer minimal recoil while delivering impressive accuracy, especially with match loads. If you could only have one rifle, a 7.62mm is a good choice—something the average hunter has known for decades.

The build quality, accuracy and reliability of today's 7.62mm ARs are approaching 5.56mm AR levels. Not that long ago, you would be lucky to find one that worked. Finding a duty-reliable 7.62mm AR could sometimes be a futile exercise. That has certainly changed, but some big-bore ARs are not without their issues.

Compared to their 5.56mm brethren, 7.62mm ARs can be heavy. Thinner barrels help, along with newer forgings and lightweight materials. They're also loud and produce significant muzzle blast, even with a flash suppressor, which can be problematic for entry work. The solutions for these issues are easy—in theory. Use quality forgings, shorten the barrel and add a suppressor. Unfortunately, theory and practice are often different.

7.62MM



The MK212SD ran flawlessly with a number of sound suppressors, including the ultra-compact, titanium Brevis suppressor from Delta P Designs.

The free-floating handguard offers a long top rail for sights and optics as well as KeyMod slots along the sides and bottoms for other accessories.



Gas piston operating systems have largely solved the short barrel issue, with barrels around 12 to 13 inches long being the norm these days. Some require a brake, making them unusable off the range, especially if you're in close proximity to others. The weight of these rifles is getting better each year.

Suppressing a 12-inch-barreled AR can be a nightmare. One rifle that does it well is the MK212 from Primary Weapons Systems (PWS). Its long-stroke piston operating system lends itself to short barrels in general. Given the correct suppressor, even PWS' 12.75-inch-barreled 7.62mm AR remains reliable enough for duty, prompting the creation of a suppressor-dedicated rifle—the MK212SD.

Silent Striker

Shortening 7.62mm ARs makes them very handy without compromising their practicality at realistic distances. These rifles can be used across a room or across a field. A 12.75-inch-barreled AR remains plenty lethal at 800 yards. Using a suppressor with a short-barreled AR just makes sense. My standard MK212 works great with a flash suppressor, but I would never field it that way on purpose. It's tactically unsound and just not pleasant to shoot. At the request of its customers, PWS designed the MK212SD, a simple rifle that only works with a sound suppressor.

PWS' MK212 rifles start with upper and lower receivers forged from 7075-T6 aluminum, which allows for tighter tolerances, saves weight and adds strength. The MK212SD's 12.75-inch, chrome-moly barrel has a heavy contour and a 1-in-10-inch twist rate. PWS also furnishes the barrel with enhanced feed ramps before treating it with Isonite QPQ for enhanced surface hardness and corrosion resistance. The low-profile gas block is mounted close to the muzzle with a small port for greater reliability.

Surrounding the gas system and barrel is PWS' free-floating handguard, which sports a long top rail for adding optics and night vision, KeyMod slots along the sides and bottom for accessories, and four QD sling-attachment points. Mapul's polymer, flip-up MBUS sights come with the MK212SD.





The author tested the MK212SD on the range with a few additions, including a recoil-absorbing ATI Scorpion pistol grip (left) and Lancer's 20-round, translucent L7AWM mags (far left).

PWS' enhanced bolt group has increased mass, extending the dwell time and delaying unlocking. This decreases the chamber pressure for easier extraction. The bolt, designed specifically for this gas piston operating system, is optimized for the 7.62mm NATO. Coated in nickel-Teflon, it is easy to clean and less susceptible to fouling.

The lower receiver includes a flared magazine well and an enlarged trigger-guard. PWS also installs its enhanced buffer tube, which is durable, offers QD sling attachment points, prevents carrier tilt and does away with the castle nut. The buffer tube sports a Magpul MOE stock to match the MOE pistol grip. For



A collapsible Magpul MOE buttstock is attached to the MK212SD's enhanced buffer tube, which prevents carrier tilt and does away with the need for a castle nut.

SPECS

PRIMARY WEAPONS SYSTEMS MK212SD	
Caliber:	7.62mm NATO
Barrel:	12.75 inches
OA Length:	27.5 inches
Weight:	8.81 pounds (empty)
Stock:	Magpul MOE
Sights:	Magpul MBUS
Action:	Piston-operated semi-auto
Finish:	Matte black
Capacity:	20+1
MSRP:	$2,600

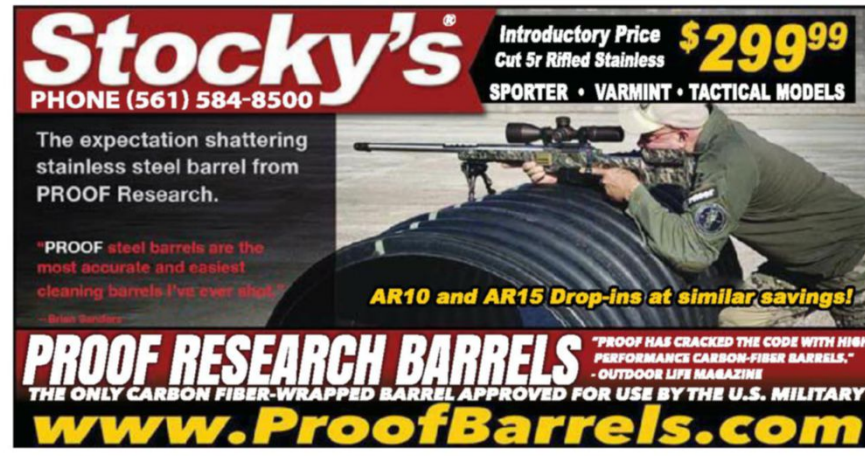
the MK212SD, PWS uses an H4 buffer and a standard carbine spring. The remaining controls are mil-spec.

For testing the rifle, I replaced the factory trigger with a Geissele Super Dynamic Combat (SD-C) trigger. I also installed a 60-degree Ambidextrous Safety Selector from Battle Arms Development as well as a Scorpion pistol grip from Advanced Technology International (ATI). I tested the MK212SD with its Magpul stock as well as one from Vltor, and I replaced the factory recoil spring with Sprinco's Orange spring. Finally, I added PRI's Gas Buster charging handle to prevent any excess gas. I used Lancer's new 20-round L7AWM magazines for the bulk of the testing. When necessary, I used a Blue Force Gear sling as well as an Atlas bipod.

Rapid Fire

My testing of the MK212SD was all about its practical application as a police rifle, putting reliability at the top of the list. I started by running the MK212SD under rapid fire with several types of ammunition from 10 to 400 yards. I used a U.S. Optics 1-8X SR-8C scope for this portion of the evaluation. The scope's illuminated red dot allows for CQB use, while the mil-lined reticle provides holds for longer distances. The scope's knobs offer mil adjustments. I also used Dueck Defense offset sight for backup targeting.

Several suppressors were tested, including a SilencerCo Saker 762, a SureFire SOCOM762-MINI, a Yankee





Hill Machine Phantom, a Delta P Design Brevis and a Gemtech Sandstorm. Delta P Design's Brevis suppressor really ruled during the testing. The MK212SD was noticeably softer to shoot, with consistent brass ejection no matter the ammunition used. No excess gas was sent my way, either. The suppressor also tended to cool more quickly, and the rifle remained flawless no matter how fast I pulled the trigger. Moving around barricades, around my truck, and over and around walls, the rifle was truly easy to handle. Working in my range's shoothouse or out to 400 yards, the Brevis/MK212SD combination was perfect for me.

Producing tiny groups at 100 yards means little if the rifle won't hold that kind of consistency throughout its entire range. Accurately testing this premise, however, requires a long range, some software and maybe some help from an expert. A trip to meet Buck Doyle of Follow Through Consulting at his range in Teasdale, Utah, took care of it all.

Buck Doyle is friends with Todd Hodnett, a leading sniper instructor and ballistics guru. Todd's training, coupled with Bryan Litz's Applied Ballistics program, is recognized as state of the art by our most elite military units. Recent training with Chase Stroud, a world-class precision rifle competitor, would indicate that the competitive world thinks the same way. The best setup these days is to load the Applied Ballistics software into a Kestrel weather station. Buck's range allowed us to properly true the rifle using this device and test its accuracy at the realistic limits of its range.

Hiking up a short hill, we ended up in a slot that looked down a beautiful valley with steel targets placed at ranges designed for this gun and caliber. For these distances, we used a U.S.



The MK212SD printed tight groups out to 765 meters using an Atlas bipod, a Gemtech Sandstorm and a U.S. Optics MR10 scope.

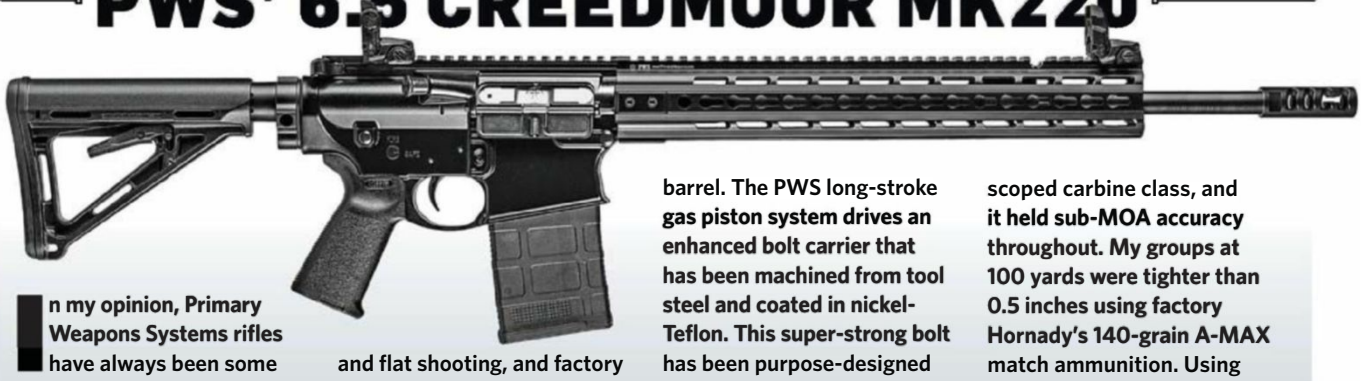
PERFORMANCE

PRIMARY WEAPONS SYSTEMS MK212SD

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
Black Hills 175 OTM	2,307	0.80
Federal 168 Gold Medal Match	2,400	0.75
Hornady 155 TAP	2,459	0.70
Nosler 168 Trophy Match	2,397	0.72
Silver State Armory 175 OTM	2,240	0.85

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in fps by chronograph, and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 100 yards.

PWS' 6.5 CREEDMOOR MK220



In my opinion, Primary Weapons Systems rifles have always been some of the softest-shooting AR rifles. They run cool with light recoil, work reliably and are very accurate. So, PWS seemed to me a perfect fit to try the now very popular 6.5mm Creedmoor. This chambering is really taking off in both AR-style rifles and bolt guns. It is accurate and flat shooting, and factory match ammunition is readily available. Primary Weapons Systems has answered this demand with a limited run of 6.5 Creedmoor MK220 rifles.

Starting with the company's forged receivers and light but strong handguard, the 6.5 Creedmoor MK220 uses a 20-inch, stainless steel barrel. The PWS long-stroke gas piston system drives an enhanced bolt carrier that has been machined from tool steel and coated in nickel-Teflon. This super-strong bolt has been purpose-designed for use with .30-caliber cartridges. The four-position gas block allows you to tune the rifle for proper operation for specific ammunition, when suppressed or under harsh environmental conditions.

I was able to test the new 6.5 Creedmoor MK220 out to over 800 yards during a scoped carbine class, and it held sub-MOA accuracy throughout. My groups at 100 yards were tighter than 0.5 inches using factory Hornady's 140-grain A-MAX match ammunition. Using precision handloads, groups were closer to 0.35 inches. With an OSS suppressor, the PWS was soft-shooting, quiet and deadly accurate. If you are in the market for a long-range AR, make sure you take a very close look at the PWS MK220 in 6.5 Creedmoor.

—David Bahde

Optics MR10 1.8-10x scope in a set of Seekins Precision rings. The scope features Horus' H425 reticle, which allows for wind and elevation holds at longer distances. We placed a 6-inch steel target at 100 yards to confirm our zero, then 765 meters for truing.

Using the Gemtech suppressor, my first hit was dead center at 100 yards. The Sandstorm is lightweight and very quiet—perfect for precision rifle applications. Moving to 765 meters, I fired several shots and achieved dead-center hits on steel using an 8.4-mil hold. U.S. Optics' glass and the Horus H-425 reticle made solid holds easy and consistent. I placed this hold and range into the Kestrel system to obtain an accurate range card, which I then tested by consistently hitting 12-inch plates between 200 and 600 meters. Getting first-round hits on each, the rifle was trued for this ammunition with an accurate range card. Just enter the atmospheric conditions for the area you are in and the Applied Ballistics software does the rest.

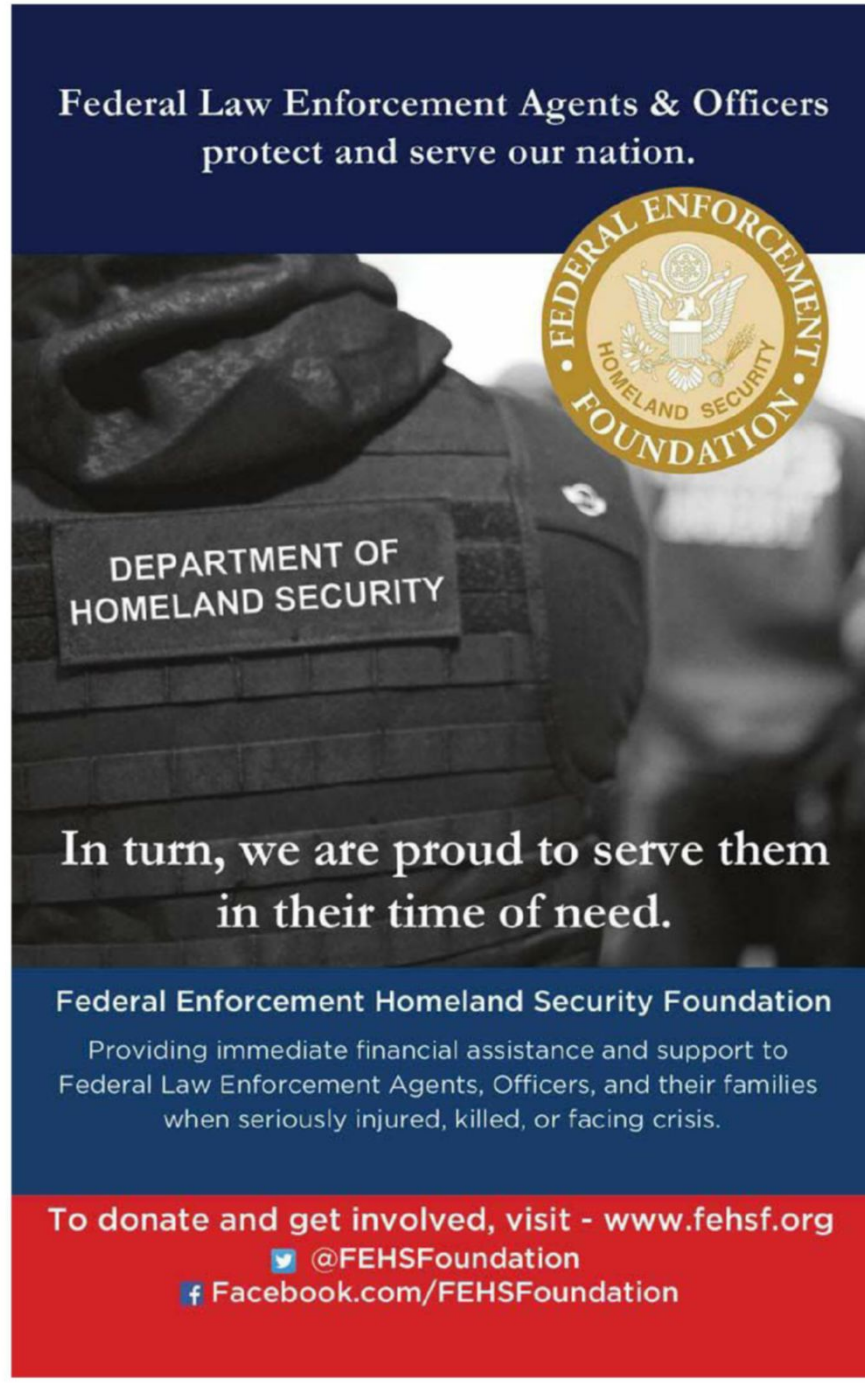
Along with truing the rifle, we tested its combat accuracy at distance. Ideally, you want it to hold close to 1 MOA at range. Once the 8.4-mil hold was confirmed, I fired a four-round group at a sustained rate of fire. With a 0.3-mil hold, the rifle was not only true, but it also held 1 MOA out to 765 meters (roughly 850 yards). That, coupled with consistent first-round hits from 200 to 600 yards, gives you a true indication of the rifle's real-world accuracy.

Sub-MOA Results

This rifle's typical range accuracy was impressive. Hornady's 155-grain TAP ammo produced the best group at 0.7 inches while using the Gemtech Sandstorm suppressor. Everything was sub-1-inch, with most groups under 0.75 inches. Testing at 400 yards with the TAP yielded a 3-inch group, making this an easy 1-MOA range gun with solid match ammunition.

Ultimately, this is a great rifle. It was flawless, accurate and comfortable to shoot. This is one of the softest-shooting suppressed 7.62mm ARs I've ever used, and it's a fine example PWS' continuing emphasis on simple reliability. For more information, call 208-344-5217 or visit primaryweapons.com. SW







When the San Bernardino County, California, Sheriff's Department needed a short-barreled, select-fire 7.62mm AR, POF-USA answered the call with its unstoppable P308-FA. Shown with a Leupold 1-6x20mm Mark 6 riflescope.

FULL-AUTO PATRIOT

POF-USA's P308-FA workhorse keeps on running and delivers barrier-busting power!

BY MIKE DETTY • PHOTOS BY ALEX LANDEEN

It was a solicitation by the San Bernardino County, California, Sheriff's Department (SBCSD) for a short-barreled, select-fire .308 Winchester/7.62mm rifle that led to my meeting with Frank DeSomma, the president and founder of Patriot Ordnance Factory, or POF-USA, at his Phoenix, Arizona, factory.

Sitting in DeSomma's office, it quickly became apparent that his guns weren't just of interest to law enforcement agencies. Pictures of DeSomma and celebrities like Ted Nugent, Steven Seagal, Aaron Lewis, Toby Keith and Steven Tyler adorned his office walls. So too is his Patriot artwork that has been featured in his ad campaign of a Minuteman in a tri-corner hat holding a modern POF-USA rifle.

DeSomma searched through a stack of papers on his desk and handed me the report written by Bruce Park for the SBCSD. The agency had requested a test sample of the P308-FA, a 14.5-inch-barreled, select-fire, 7.62mm rifle, for its Special Enforcement Detail (SWAT), and in the 17 months of testing, during which over 35,000 rounds were fired, meticulous notes were recorded.

Patriot Origins

POF-USA started shipping guns in 2004, and right from the beginning the company's products were always something different and innovative than the rest of the market. DeSomma had designed a regulated, short-stroke gas piston system and adapted it to the AR platform.



Several features helped the P308-FA reach such high round counts during the full-auto testing, including POF-USA's gas piston system and superior metal coatings.

"Even after 35,000 rounds, the P308-FA was still producing 1.5-MOA groups at 500 yards."

In the beginning, his guns were looked at with a jaundiced eye by the shooting community. Most of us withheld judgment while we waited for his guns to establish a track record—good or bad. DeSomma had come from the aerospace industry, and he put his 28 years of process engineering to use. He used different materials and coatings and, in general, not doing things the established way that traditional firearms manufacturers did things. By and large, the majority of the industry is traditional and does not accept change without resistance. It turns out DeSomma wasn't so much a renegade as he was a trendsetter, and other companies are now following his lead.

An unapologetic patriot, DeSomma gives credit to living in a nation where freedom and liberty still mean something special. He even laser engraves his ejection port covers with "God bless America" and a picture of the U.S. flag. "Freedom breeds innovation," DeSomma said with a grin.

My meeting at POF-USA wasn't the first time I had seen DeSomma's short-barreled .308s. Back in 2009, POF-USA's shooting team competed with 12.5-inch-barreled guns at the DPMS Tri-Gun match in St. Cloud, Minnesota, and placed very well.

So when the SBCSD came looking for a .308 the same length as its issued 5.56mm ARs, POF-USA had its P308-FA ready. Other brands were tested and eventually discarded, and after accepting the P308-FA, the SBCSD armory attempted to "determine the life cycles of the various components of the rifle and ultimately the service life of the rifle itself." Used in training and demonstrations, the rifle received little maintenance other than occasionally lubricating the bolt carrier.

Torture Test

Run in both semi- and full-auto with brass- and steel-cased ammo, the gun ran without a malfunction for 23,500 rounds, when a two-round burst produced a double feed. It was determined that the buffer spring had become compressed by over 1.5 inches and was replaced. The gun returned to normal functioning until around 28,600 rounds, when some chrome plating on the gas piston flaked off and caused enough drag for intermittent malfunctions. POF-USA used this as a learning experience and stopped chroming its pistons. A running change was made to nitrate-heat-treat the pistons to eliminate any chance of delamination. In the case of the SBCSD rifle, a new piston got this gun back to running at 100 percent. The bolt's ejector spring was responsible for some failures to eject at about 29,080 rounds, and replacing this part corrected the problem immediately.







1. Like the rest of the P308-FA, the charging handle is a heavy-duty design that can withstand harsh use with ease.

2. Note the "FA" marking on the full-auto-capable bolt carrier group as well as the P308-FA's uniquely engraved dust cover.

3. The P308-FA lower features an enlarged, integral triggerguard, anti-walk pins and a Magpul MOE pistol grip.



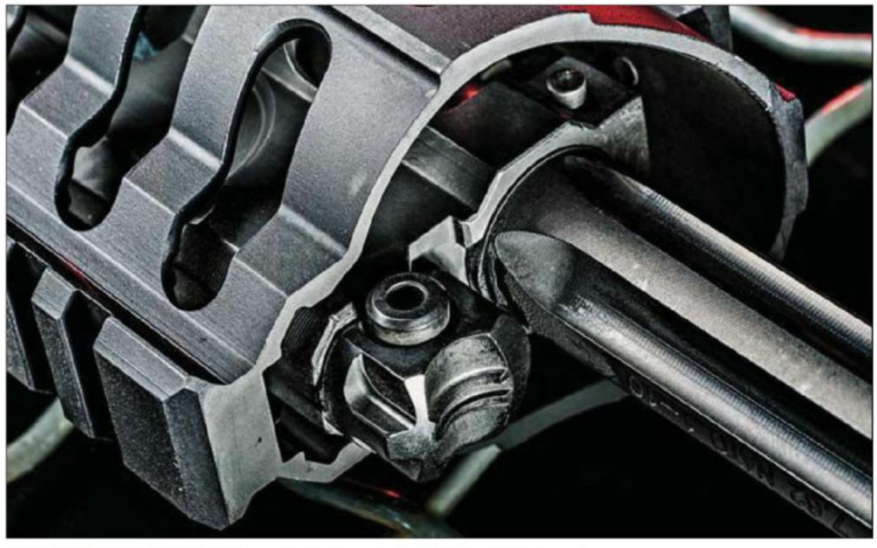
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The MRR forend surrounds the fluted, nitride-heat-treated barrel and gas piston system (above), which is adjustable for conditions. The barrel is also capped with POF-USA's highly effective triple-port muzzle brake (left), which helps reduce muzzle rise.

At around 34,280 rounds, empty cases were being extracted but sliding off the extractor before they could be ejected during full-auto. The extractor wasn't broken, but its edges were burnished from use. Replacing the extractor cured this problem, and the testing continued to 35,480 rounds, at which point the after-action report was written. If you're not impressed, then you've never put this many rounds through the same gun. For a weapon to reach this round count with just minimum maintenance and a having just a few parts replaced is incredible. The P308-FA is more than just the sum of its parts—it is the summation of a collection of mind-blowing innovations.

Higher Grade

The heart of the POF-USA gun is its regulated gas piston system. Gas is bled from the barrel into an expansion chamber where the piston impacts the operating rod, which transfers enough kinetic energy to the bolt carrier to start the unlocking, extracting, ejecting and chambering sequence. DeSomma's design uses an undersized piston. There are no rings or friction-fit parts here. As DeSomma said, "It's free-floating." Tightly fit parts create friction, and friction creates heat and wear. This design uses enough gas to cycle the action and vents everything else off. Parts stay cool and don't wear out prematurely.

Another of DeSomma's innovations is his roller cam, which reduces friction and drag and takes most of the impact out of locking and unlocking. The original cam design is rectangular and made from steel and over time can cause significant wear inside an aluminum receiver.

Coatings are an important component of the POF-USA quality equation. "I spent a lifetime in aerospace," said DeSomma. "Every part we made had a coating designed to reduce friction, dissipate and protect from heat, prevent corrosion and prolong its service life. We use Robar's NP3 electroless nickel-Teflon finish, which not only has high lubricity and a low friction coefficient, but it also increases the part's surface hardness. We use it on the bolt carrier and hard chrome our bolts. Our barrels are nitrate heat treated—basically a casehardening process that increases the hardness of the metal to 70 Rockwell. Our barrels are easier to clean and don't copper foul like chrome-lined barrels, and they can't delaminate from heat. We also use it on the gas block, pistons and muzzle devices."

As I toured the POF-USA factory I noticed that they were using steel-cased Wolf ammunition for test firing. Many companies warn expressly against the use of steel-cased ammo. DeSomma said, "The new poly-coated cases are so much better than the old lacquered cases. We buy it by the pallet load. In fact, we donated 5,000 rounds to the SBCSD for its testing of the P308-FA. Our nitrate-heat-treated barrel chambers are so much harder than the steel case that it can't hurt our barrels."

In 2014, DeSomma introduced the "infoulable" E^2 dual extraction system. "Extraction has always been the Achilles' heel of Stoner's design. If you spend significant time shooting your AR, you probably keep the bolt wet with lube. You drop some cartridges in the dirt, blow them off and load them into your mags. Before you know it dirt and lube have migrated into your chamber, where the heat bakes it, and suddenly you're having extraction problems. The neck of the cartridge and the chamber, which supports the cartridge neck, are both cylinders, and the neck of the cartridge case forms to the chamber when the round is fired. Ever try to pick up a 5-gallon bucket that's sitting inside of another bucket? You need to break the seal, and that's what we do with the

— Continued on page 128

SPECS

POF-USA P308-FA	
Caliber:	7.62mm NATO
Barrel:	14.5 inches
OA Length:	33.5-36.76 inches
Weight:	8.5 pounds (empty)
Stock:	Magpul CTR
Sights:	None
Action:	Piston-operated, select-fire
Finish:	Black anodized or NP3
Capacity:	20+1
MSRP:	N/A



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The new MK-107 has reinvented the AK platform with an innovative "balanced action" that helps reduce felt recoil and increase accuracy.

BALANCE OF POWER

Russia's introduced a new balanced-action AK for faster hits and less recoil!

BY MAXIM POPENKER

The Saiga MK-107 was conceived by the Izhmash factory (now part of Kalashnikov Concern) in 2012 as a semi-auto version of the abortive AK-107 assault rifle, which featured a balanced action. After several years of testing and development, the Saiga MK-107 is scheduled to enter mass production in 2016 under a new name: AK-15. It will be available for Russian shooters under the same "hunting rifle" license as other semi-automatic rifles of the Saiga family. It also will be offered for export sales.

The semi-automatic Saiga MK-107 carbine is intended primarily for sport shooters in IPSC, IDPA and 3-Gun. In all of these disciplines, speed and accuracy are of equal importance, and the Saiga MK-107—as well as the upcoming improved AK-15—is intended to provide sport shooters with a carbine that allows for precision, very fast follow-up shots and optimum reliability.

Achieving Balance

The so-called "balanced action" came into existence as a result of numerous attempts to decrease the recoil of rapid-firing weapons, where the rearward and forward movement of the action parts (such as the bolt group) create additional forces that tend to disrupt a shooter's sight plane. This is especially true if the bolt group hits a stationary receiver at the end of its recoil stroke. A classic example of a gun known for its recoil is the AK and its descendants. An AKM's bolt group weighs about 1.19 pounds and, under normal conditions, hits the rear of the receiver with a velocity of about 11 to 13 fps. This adds another 20 percent of force to the overall recoil impulse. Of course, the impulse of the moving parts is an intentional feature that greatly increases the overall reliability of the gun, but in this case reliability comes at a price of decreased accuracy.

Soviet research and development programs attempted to decrease the AK's recoil impulse, and in the late 1960s, researcher Peter Tkachev from TsNII-TochMash introduced a new concept of balancing the impulse of recoiling parts. According to his concept, the recoil impulse of the moving parts can be neutralized by the counter-recoil impulse of additional parts that weigh about the same as the

bolt group and move synchronously but in the opposite direction as a counterweight.

In the early 1970s, Soviet gun designers developed several balanced-action assault rifles using then-new 5.45x39mm ammunition. Among these were designs from Izhevsk and Kovrov, such as the AL-4M and SA-006, respectively. The latter became the main rival to the new 5.45x39mm Kalashnikov rifle during Soviet army trials in 1974. In fact, the SA-006 outperformed what would become the AK-74 in terms of hit probability, especially when firing from unsupported and off-hand positions or on the move. It also performed adequately well in terms of reliability and durability. Despite that, the Soviet army adopted the Kalashnikov design, which was simpler, cheaper and already familiar to troops. The main reason behind this "retrograde" decision was to get a new small-bore rifle into service as soon as possible and with minimal teething problems, and to close the gap between Soviet and U.S. armies in terms of small-arms effectiveness.

It seems that the AK-74 was considered a stopgap, as in the late 1970s several research and development programs were well underway to create assault rifles much more effective than existing designs, including the AK-74 and M16A1. These programs, among other approaches, extensively pursued balanced-action designs. As a result of these programs, the Soviet army held its famous "Abakan" trials in the 1980s that featured several balanced-action rifles. However, the weapon that won the trials, the Nikonov AN-94, took a different approach. Despite this setback, two major small arms developers continued their work on balanced-action systems: the Izhmash factory with its AKB line of experimental assault rifles developed by Viktor Kalashnikov (the son of Mikhail Kalashnikov), and the Kovrov Mechanical Plant (KMZ), which developed the AEK-971 rifle.

The experimental AK-107 rifle, which served as a starting point for Saiga MK-107 development, is a direct descendant of the AKB rifle. Unlike previous designs,

"Through some 1,000 or so rounds of cheap Barnaul 55-grain .223 fodder, there wasn't a single malfunction."









The Saiga MK-107 rifle can be easily distinguished by an enlarged housing above the barrel that covers the forward-moving gas piston with its counter-balancing weight.

SPECS

SAIGA MK-107	
Caliber:	5.56x45mm, 5.45x39mm
Barrel:	16.3 inches
OA Length:	37 inches
Weight:	8.8 pounds
Stock:	Collapsible
Sights:	None
Action:	Piston-operated semi-auto
Finish:	Matte black
Capacity:	30+1
MSRP:	N/A

the AK-107 is broadly based on the "Hundred" series of AK rifles, but unlike its simpler cousins, like the 5.56x45mm AK-101 and 7.62x39mm AK-103, it was never mass-produced. The balanced-action AEK-971 assault rifle was present for the recent "Ratnik" trials, but so far its fate is undecided and a semi-automatic civilian version has yet to materialize.

Izhmash, on the other hand, proposed its more traditional AK-12 as a possible new assault rifle for the Russian army. But the balanced action was revived in 2012 for the civilian market after requests from two top Russian IPSC shooters—Andrew Kirisenko and Vsevolod Ilin—who wanted familiar AK-style weapons but with better recoil control during rapid fire. After a couple of years, Izhmash produced an improved, semi-automatic Saiga MK-107 carbine broadly based on the AK-107. It featured a similar action with a number of improvements for competition shooters, including a bolt-hold-open device, a magazine well and ambidextrous bolt handles, but without any select-fire capability.

As mentioned, an improved version of the Saiga MK-107, the AK-15, will enter production in 2016. This rifle features improved furniture and an enhanced trigger, and it's intended to become a top-of-the-line race gun for Russian shooters who want a gun that combines AK reliability with Western accuracy and controllability. The AK-15 is available in both 5.56x45mm and 5.45x39mm chamberings, with the former using AR-15-style magazines and the latter using AK-74-compatible magazines. It should be noted that the 5.45x39mm was recently certified in Russia for civilian use (with lead-core bullets).

A Closer Look

The Saiga MK-107's recoil-mitigating balanced action features two gas pistons that enter the T-shaped gas block from opposite directions. The rear gas piston is attached to the bolt carrier group and moves in a traditional cycle (rearward, then forward). The forward gas piston, which moves in the opposite direction at the same time, is attached to a sliding counterweight located above the bolt carrier group. To facilitate easier disassembly, the gas piston heads are hinged to their respective carriers.

Both counter-recoiling masses are synchronized by a pair of rotating gears, so after each discharge, the rearward and forward movement of the bolt group is balanced by a counter-moving mass attached to the forward gas piston, effectively cancelling the impulses generated by the heavy reciprocating parts.

The rifle features a conventional Kalashnikov-style rotating bolt with two locking lugs that engage the barrel trunnion pinned inside the stamped-steel receiver. Reciprocating charging handles are attached to the bolt carrier on both



The MK-107 and its upcoming AK-15 descendant are primarily intended for competitive shooters, offering top-tier performance and fast follow-up shots.

sides of the gun. The dual return spring arrangement (one for the bolt carrier and another for the counterweight) completes the setup. The primary return spring, which operates the bolt group, is offset to the left and is wound around a captive guide rod assembly.

The MK-107's top cover has been significantly redesigned compared to earlier AK-style weapons and is similar to that of the new AK-12 assault rifle. The top cover is made from stamped steel with a long Picatinny rail permanently attached on top. The top cover is attached to the receiver and the gas block by two dovetails (at the gas block and at the front of the receiver) and by a removable crosspin at the rear of the receiver. This results in a secure and stable platform for the optics attached to the top Picatinny rail. To completely remove the top cover, the operator has to remove the rear pin, slide the top cover rearwards a bit and then pull it off of the gun.

For furniture, the MK-107 features a collapsible buttstock and a polymer forend. A cross-button manual safety is located above the triggerguard, a bolt-hold-open device with release lever is located on the left side, above the magazine catch, and a mag well is installed for faster reloads. The 5.56x45mm models are designed so that the bolt will lock back after the last round is fired.



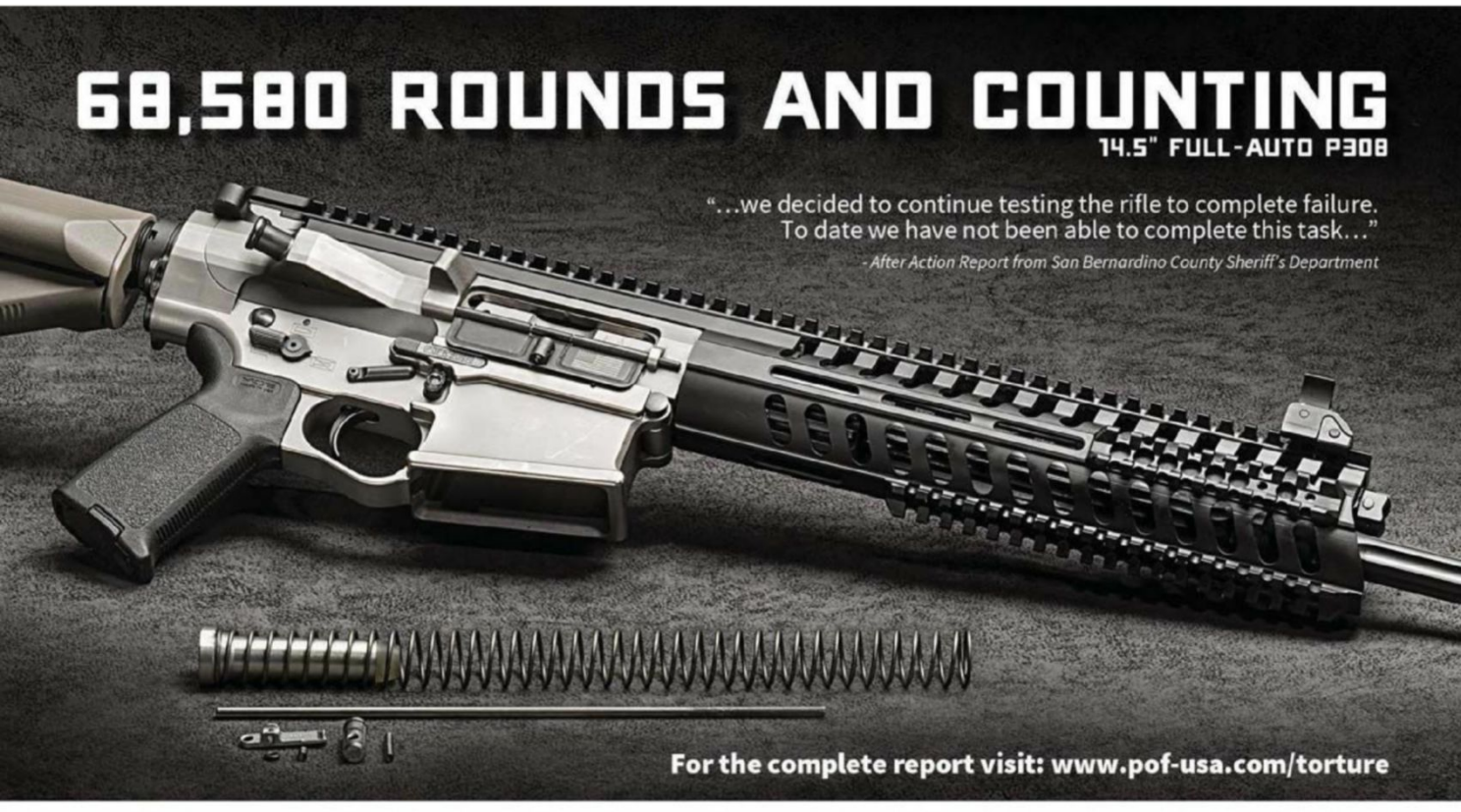
The Saiga MK-107 features an ambidextrous crossbolt-style safety, and charging handles are present on bolt sides.

Hands-On Testing

I was able to fire several 30-round magazines through a pre-production 5.56x45mm Saiga MK-107 during a demo shooting session held by Kalashnikov Concern at the Army-2015 expo. The rifle feels solid in the hands, with the comfortable collapsible stock providing a good cheekweld for the 1-4X scope installed on the test gun.

I tested the gun with slow, deliberate fire at ranges between 50 and 200 meters. At all ranges, it was pretty easy to achieve hits on the steel plates. When dialed to 4X magnification, the scope stayed on the targets all the time—a good indication of the negligible muzzle flip. The recoil was linear and almost non-existent, and I've seen serious IPSC shooters run the MK-107 in very fast strings of fire, achieving rapid hits at 200 meters and beyond without scoring a single miss.

Through some 1,000 or so rounds of cheap Barnaul 55-grain .223 fodder, there wasn't a single malfunction. It seems that the MK-107, and the soon-to-be-introduced AK-15, are set to truly make waves in the world of AK-platform weapons. For more information, visit kalashnikovconcern.ru. SW



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SIGNATURE G34

The GLOCKSTORE's customized 9mm is ready to reign on the range.

BY JORGE AMSELLE • PHOTOS BY ALEX LANDEEN

The Glock 17, which was first introduced to American shooters in 1986, seemed like a revolutionary design. In many ways it was, and there was a lot of initial grumbling about it—even from me. But this unique pistol soon found its footing and gained incredibly widespread acceptance. Glocks are now the most popular pistols in the law enforcement arena.

Glock pistols are popular for several reasons. They utilize a simple design and can be entirely disassembled with nothing but a punch tool. A Glock certified armorer's course can be completed in one day, unlike the multiple-day armorer's courses for most other handguns. This combination of simplicity and popularity has led to the explosion of the aftermarket accessory and parts market, and custom gunsmiths have been turning these pistols into works of art for years.

You can buy parts for your Glock online from any number of places, but one of the best one-stop shops that specialize exclusively on this pistol is the GlockStore, which was founded by Lenny Magill. The GlockStore doesn't just sell parts—the company also provides masterful custom work on your Glock pistol. Basically, you can design your own with the help of its custom gun consultants, or you can simply purchase one of its Lenny-Magill-designed custom packages.

I had the opportunity to test a Glock 34 that was custom designed and modified by Lenny Magill. While it started life as a regular 9mm, long-slide Glock 34, the end result can only be described as an evolution, where each change advances the platform to a higher state.

> **"The G34, with its Lenny Magill-designed customizations, is sure to draw attention at the shooting range."**

Custom Build

The GSPC starts with the GlockStore's custom Pyramid Cut Slide, where the top of the slide has been cut wide open, exposing about half the length of the barrel. The sides of the slide feature distinctive pyramid-shaped cuts. The result is a significantly lighter slide resulting in faster cycling and reduced recoil for faster follow-up shots and improved accuracy. The pistol does feel noticeably less top heavy than even a standard G19, and the cuts also help with cooling. The slide also features forward slide serrations, and the external surface is polished and given a low-friction NP3 finish.

The factory, polygonal-rifled barrel has been replaced with a 5.25-inch, match-grade barrel that has been CNC-machined from 416 stainless steel. This new barrel features broach-cut rifling and a target crown so that shooters can use lead



For faster reloads, the G34 GSPC Signature Series sports a "Super Heavy" aluminum magazine well with a brass insert.

The customized Glock 34 GSPC Signature Series pistol features a redesigned Glock Gen3 frame with deeper finger grooves and a restyled triggerguard.

ammunition as well as jacketed rounds. It also features a polished feed ramp and bore as well as an oversized lockup area for a tighter fit and better accuracy.

The guide rod has been replaced with an extended tungsten carbide rod that adds extra weight to the muzzle end and helps to reduce muzzle flip and recoil. The flat-wire recoil spring comes in a factory-standard weight, but different weights are available for fine-tuning the pistol to your specific loads. This upgrade is also legal for the USPSA's Production division.

The slide features tall, suppressor-ready Trijicon night sights. They are easy to acquire and co-witness with the Trijicon RMR reflex sight that comes installed on top of the pistol. This sight features a 3.5-MOA dot and eight brightness settings that are easily adjusted for shooting conditions using the right and left buttons. It also features an "auto" mode that will self-adjust to compensate for bright sunlight or a passing cloud as well as movement into and out of buildings.

The frame of the Glock has also been radically altered from an original Gen3 Glock frame for the better. On the frontstrap, the finger grooves have been

deepened and smoothed out, which reduces the overall size of the grip while providing better retention. The rear of triggerguard has an undercut that raises the finger placement higher on the grip and smoothes this area out, eliminating any rubbing the shooting hand might receive after a full day of shooting. Finally, a triggerguard undercut at the midway point provides a space for a more secure grip for the index finger of the support hand.

At the bottom of the grip, the GlockStore has added a "Super Heavy" 4.4-ounce aluminum magazine well with a brass insert. The magazine well is widely flared and provides for much faster magazine changes, and the design forces the shooting hand into a proper and consistent grip position. Thus, the magazine well also aids in weapon retention. The brass insert that extends into the grip cavity found on all Glocks adds weight at the lower rear of the pistol for an improved balance.

The pistol ships with two 17-round Glock 17/34 magazines with heavy, extended, aluminum baseplates. From the outside, this looks like a magazine capacity extender, but it is not. The purpose here is to add weight to the bottom of the magazine so that they drop free faster when conducting magazine changes.

All of the controls on the Glock 34 have also undergone significant changes. The magazine release has been replaced with an extended aluminum catch that features aggressive lines for secure engagement. The release extends to the rear and is snag free but allows the user to engage it without having to adjust their grip, significantly speeding up mag changes. It also allows the pistol to work in standard holsters.

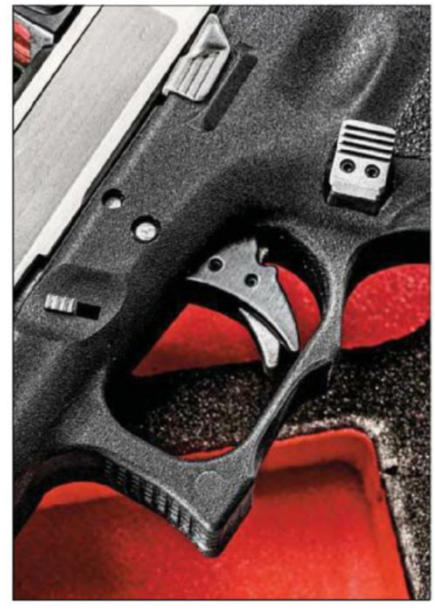
The slide release has been replaced with an extended release with a matte silver finish. The takedown lever has also been extended and thickened for improved precision. This part is machined from 416 stainless steel, and its extra length makes disassembly easier. The added thickness locks up the barrel and slide with greater consistency and strength.



Photo Courtesy John Heart/ GlockStore

Lenny Magill personally selected the impressive upgrades and custom work for this signature pistol.





Internal Upgrades

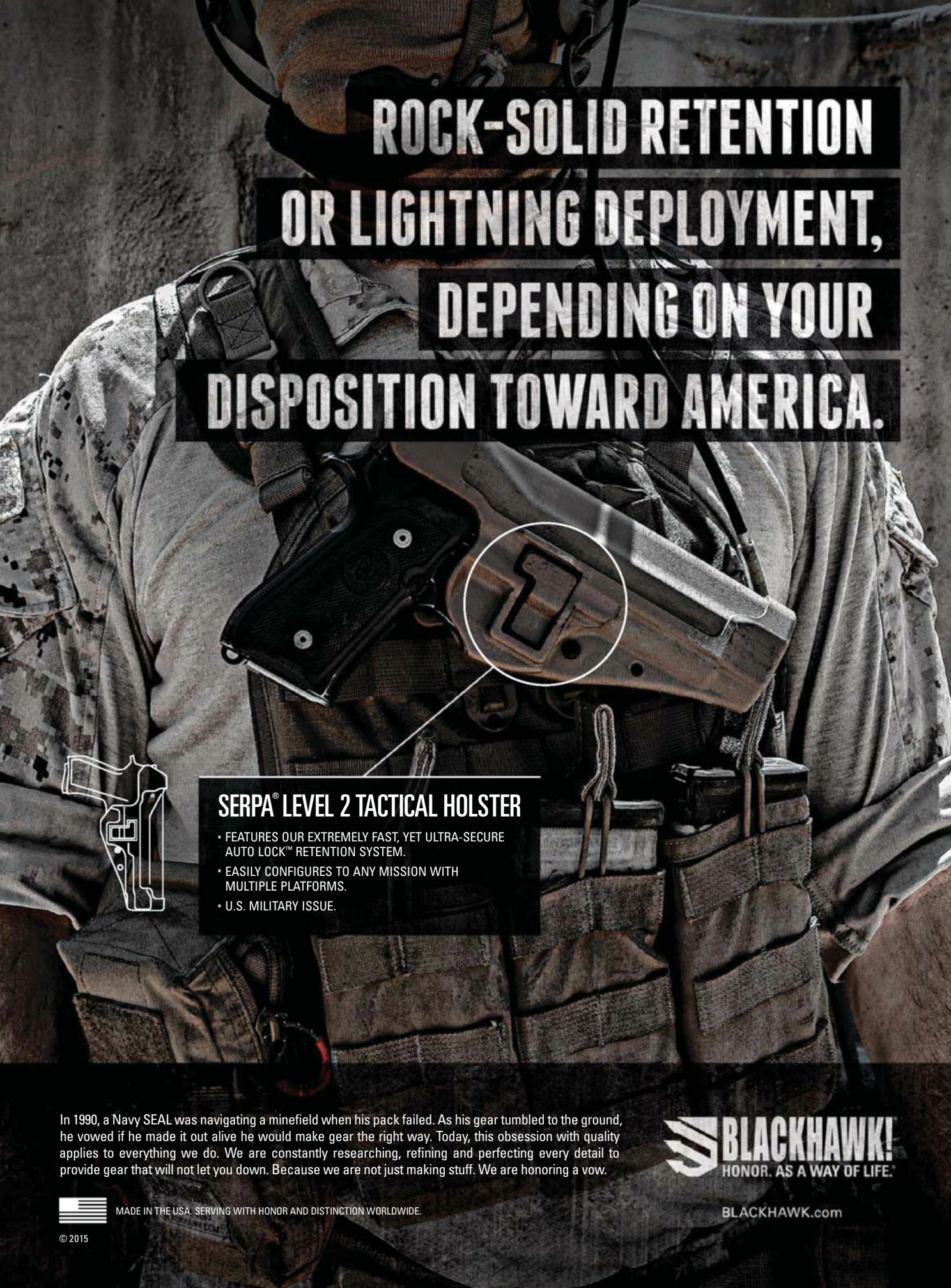
Internally, there are still more changes. The trigger, locking block and trigger housing pins have all been replaced with stronger stainless steel pins. The factory trigger has also been replaced with an Ultimate Pyramid Trigger System for a lighter and shorter trigger pull. Unlike the factory trigger the Pyramid trigger is made from aluminum and features a wider and more comfortable trigger face and safety.

The pistol's gold-tone trigger bar is titanium-nitride coated, which results in an extremely hard, friction-less surface,

The Glock 34 GSPC Signature Series features a skeletonized slide for reduced weight and a new barrel (top left) as well as a custom-shaped frame, extended controls and an upgraded trigger (left).

SPECS

GLOCK 34 GSPC SIGNATURE SERIES	
Caliber:	9mm
Barrel:	5.25 inches
OA Length:	8.25 inches
Weight:	28.3 ounces (empty)
Grips:	Polymer
Sights:	Trijicon night, RMR
Action:	Strike-fired
Finish:	Matte black, silver
Capacity:	17+1
MSRP:	$2,295


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The Trijicon RMR reflex sight that came with the Glock 34 made it easy to get on target quickly during testing.

PERFORMANCE

GLOCK 34 GSPC SIGNATURE SERIES

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
Black Hills 115 JHP	1,275	2.08
HPR 115 JHP	1,188	2.97
Sig Sauer 124 JHP	1,241	1.55

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in fps by chronograph, and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 25 yards.

providing a crisp and consistent break. A titanium safety plunger with rounded shoulders is also installed to reduce wear and offer positive engagement. The replacement spring kit improves functioning, while the 3.5-pound Double Diamond connector reduces the trigger pull weight and is NP3 treated for natural lubricity and smoothness as well as a longer service life.

The skeletonized striker is made from polished steel and is titanium-nitride coated for reduced friction. When combined with the lower weight of the striker, the result is much faster lock times for improved accuracy. The striker is also slightly extended to ensure positive engagement against all primer types, even hard primers.

Rounds Downrange

On the range, the pistol was comfortable and easy to shoot. Muzzle flip was virtually nonexistent despite the lightened slide. The trigger did have a distinctly different feel from a polymer Glock trigger and took a bit of getting used to. Using 115-grain JHP ammunition, I did experience a few failures to feed and one failure of the slide to lock to the rear on an empty magazine.

This pistol has been extensively tuned for competition and, as such, needs to be paired to the right ammunition. I had no issues with heavier 124-grain or 147 grain loads while shooting off-hand. The malfunctions were largely limited to benchrest shooting where "limp wristing" was a contributing factor. Suffice it to say that this is a competition gun, not a benchrest gun. For accuracy testing, I used three different factory defensive loads at 25 yards from a stable benchrest.

The G34, with its Lenny Magill-designed customizations, is sure to draw attention at the shooting range. It's designed for competition and makes shooting a pleasure. For more, visit glockstore.com or call 800-601-8273. SW

THE STEALTH G19

The GlockStore provides a Lenny Magill-designed custom package for concealed carry called the Stealth Melt. In many ways, this Glock 19 is the opposite of its larger G34 cousin but with no fewer custom features, just more subdued. The slide features low-profile Trijicon night sights, serrations at the front and rear, skeletonizing with a slim cut above the barrel and channels on both sides of the slide. The slide has also undergone a complete "melt" treatment, with all edges smoothed out and rounded off, before being given a black Cerakote finish.



The entire frame has undergone extensive reshaping as well, with deep finger grooves, a smooth backstrap and a rounded triggerguard with an undercut at the rear of the guard for comfort. The magazine release, slide stop and takedown lever have all been extended for improved CCW use. Internally, the pistol features a Double Diamond barrel, a tungsten guide rod, a stainless steel pin kit and the Ultimate Pyramid trigger system.

SPECS

GLOCK 19 GSPC STEALTH MELT

Caliber:	9mm
Barrel:	4 inches
OA Length:	6.9 inches
Weight:	20.8 ounces (empty)
Grips:	Polymer
Sights:	Trijicon night
Action:	Strike-fired
Finish:	Matte black
Capacity:	15+1
MSRP:	$1,699

Clunk-AR

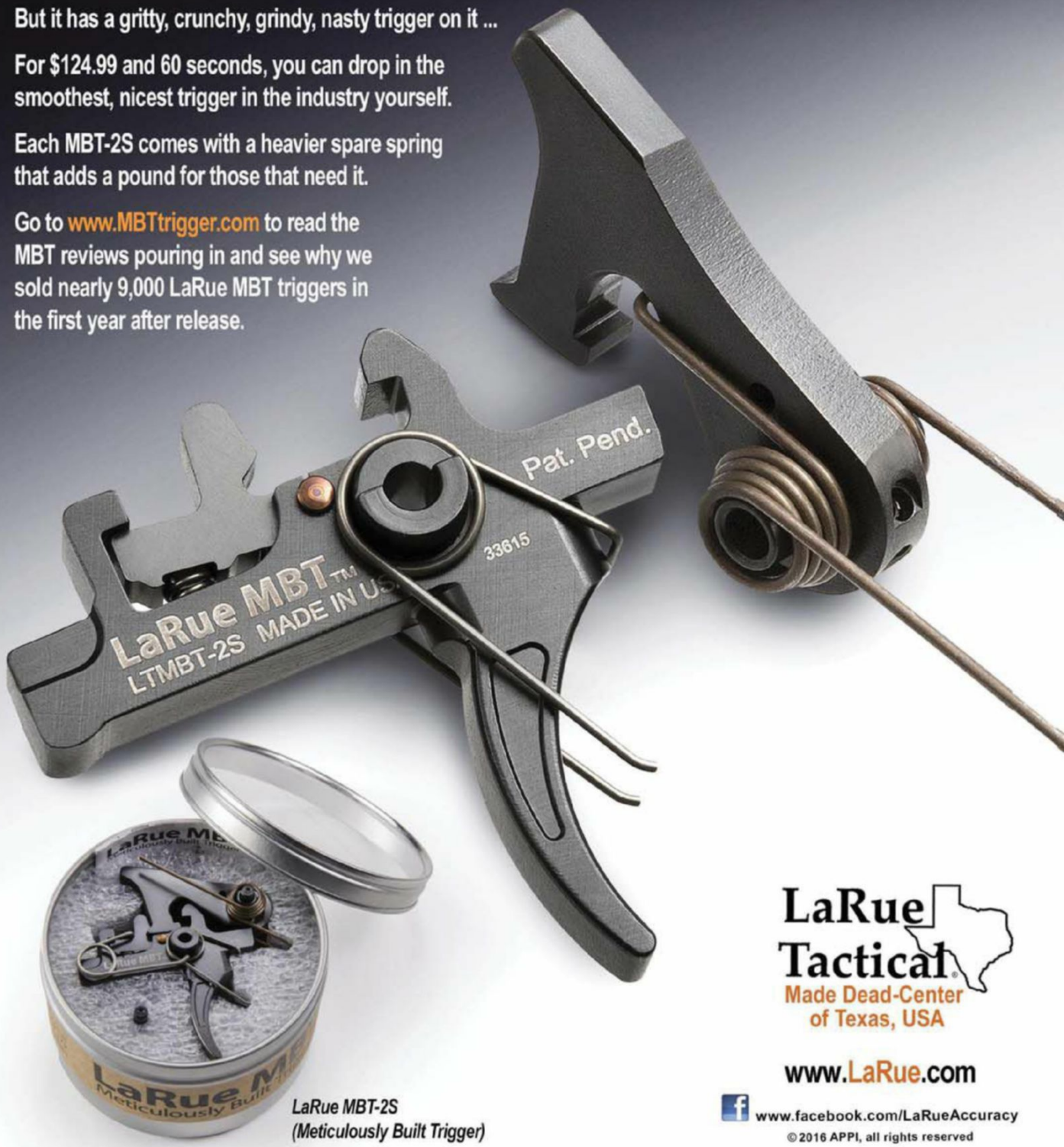
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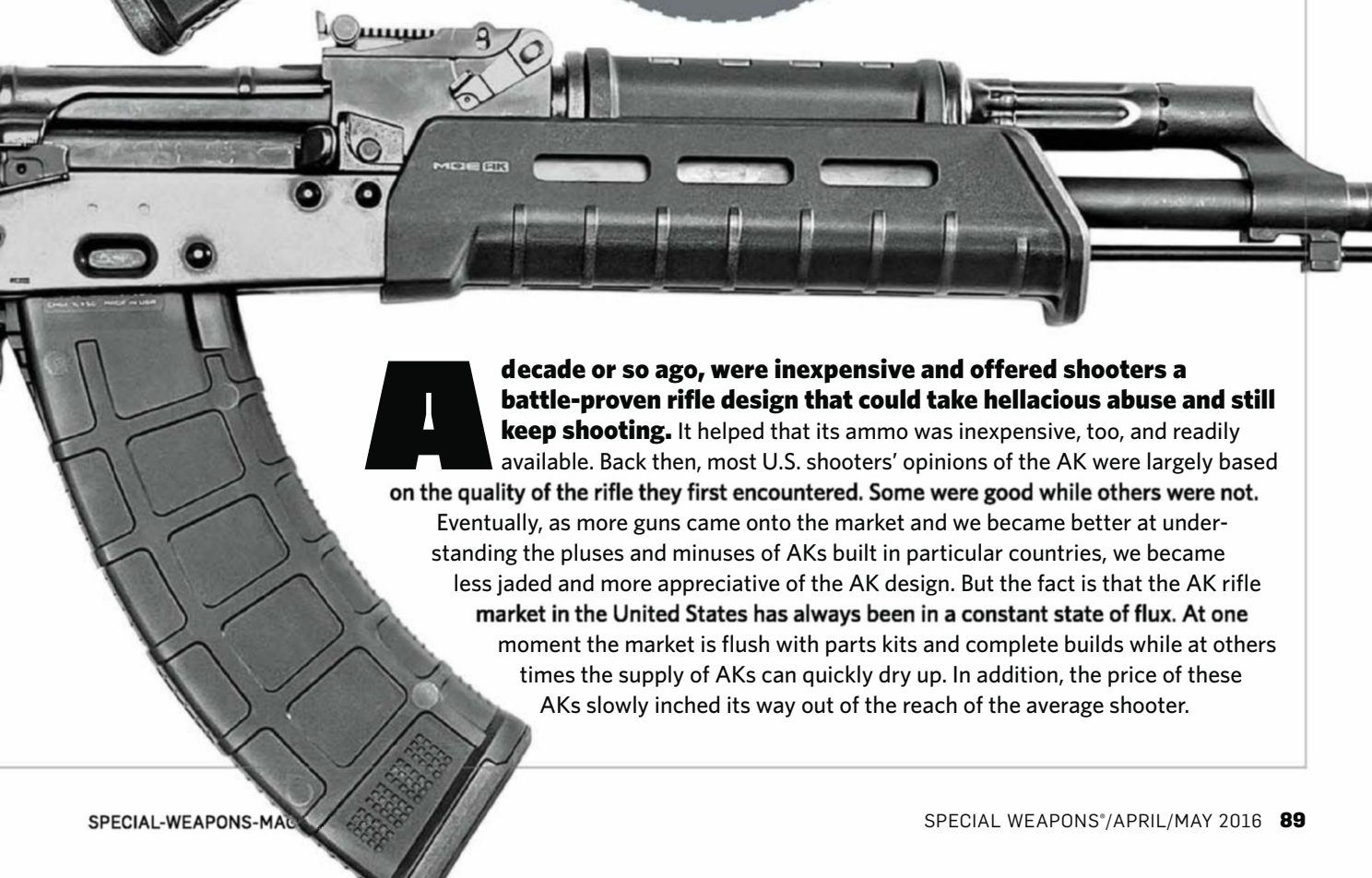
BY ROBERT A. SADOWSKI



Palmetto State Armory has remastered the classic AK-47 design and is producing it right here in the U.S.A. Outfitted with top-notch Magpul furniture, the PSAK-47 is tricked out for 21st century shooters while still being very affordable.



"While in development, PSA took 25 PSAK-47s and ran them through a 10,000-round torture test."

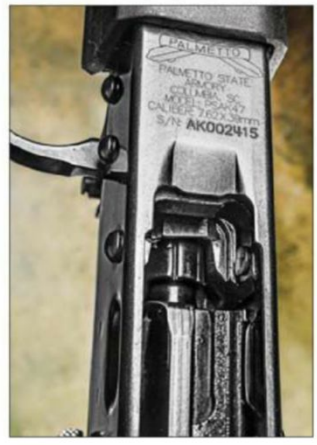


A decade or so ago, were inexpensive and offered shooters a battle-proven rifle design that could take hellacious abuse and still keep shooting. It helped that its ammo was inexpensive, too, and readily available. Back then, most U.S. shooters' opinions of the AK were largely based on the quality of the rifle they first encountered. Some were good while others were not. Eventually, as more guns came onto the market and we became better at understanding the pluses and minuses of AKs built in particular countries, we became less jaded and more appreciative of the AK design. But the fact is that the AK rifle market in the United States has always been in a constant state of flux. At one moment the market is flush with parts kits and complete builds while at others times the supply of AKs can quickly dry up. In addition, the price of these AKs slowly inched its way out of the reach of the average shooter.



SPECS

PSAK-47 MOE EDITION	
Caliber:	7.62x39mm
Barrel:	16.2 inches
OA Length:	35.25 inches
Weight:	6.75 pounds (empty)
Stock:	Magpul MOE
Sights:	Front post, adjustable rear
Action:	Piston-operated semi-auto
Finish:	Matte black
Capacity:	30+1
MSRP:	$700



ABOVE: The PSAK-47's rear sight is a ladder-style unit that can be adjusted for shooting out to 800 yards.

RIGHT: Palmetto State Armory engraves the rifle's markings on the bottom of the receiver, in front of the mag well.

Palmetto State Armory (PSA) intends to change that fact. Early in 2015, PSA showed off some prototypes of a U.S.-made AK-47 called the PSAK-47 with a retail price of around $699 depending on furniture. People were impressed. It was compared to AKs that retail at $1,200 or more. Larry Vickers gave the PSAK-47 high praise, calling it the "Cadillac of AKs."

Eastern Blend

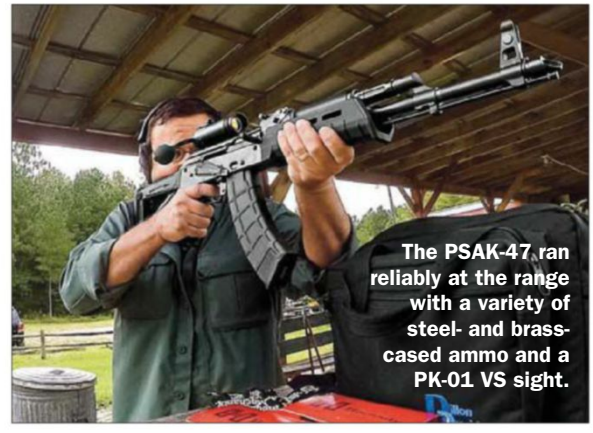
PSA had a lot to live up to as it pushed forward with production, and after testing a PSAK-47 MOE Edition rifle, I have to agree that the PSAK-47 is impressive, well made, outfitted for the modern shooter and affordable. PSA has indeed remastered the AKM.

The PSAK-47 is truly Americanized. It is not Russian nor Bulgarian nor even Chinese, but an amalgamation of all the good design traits of an AK made into one. When asked what AK-47 design blueprint the company used for the PSAK-47, Adam Ruonala, chief marketing officer at PSA, responded with not just one AK-47 design plan but numerous. "We looked at the Russian, Chinese, Romanian and Bulgarian blueprints and we took what we felt were the best features from each and incorporated them into our AK design."

The quality control PSA places on these rifles is rigorous. PSA takes about one and a half hours to assemble a rifle, not including range testing. On AK builds, the company fires 15 to 20 rounds using brass- and steel-cased ammunition. "We want to make sure our rifles perform, so we test with ammo of all quality types, from inexpensive steel-case surplus ammo to U.S.-made factory-fresh brass ammunition," said Ruonala.

While in development, PSA took 25 PSAK-47s and ran them through a 10,000-round torture test. The company wanted to ensure its AK-47 would run smoothly and reliably. "We wanted our rifle to not only perform exceptionally but look good doing it," Ruonala explained. "PSA wouldn't produce a gun that was not 100 percent."

Not only does the company check for accuracy—4 MOA or better—but it also looks for things that most shooters wouldn't notice, like ejection patterns. This is just one of several metrics PSA looks at to ensure its AKs are running smoothly and reliably.



The PSAK-47 ran reliably at the range with a variety of steel- and brass-cased ammo and a PK-01 VS sight.

Refined Design

One of the things I noticed immediately with the PSAK-47 MOE Edition was how smoothly the action cycled. I hate to use the term "silky," but it is an appropriate description. Also, and this is a minor thing, the safety selector was precise and moved securely without scratching the receiver. On some AKs, the safety selector can be loose and scratch the receiver when actuated. The third thing was the price. My guess upon opening the carton was the rifle would cost us average shooters easily $800 to $900. The PSAK-47 MOE Edition costs only $700.

"When we first started to make the AKs, we made them to mil-spec," said Ruonala. "They were tight and right on, and we found that tight...was not such a good thing for an AK. It has to have some play in it to run well," Ruonala explained. "Of the things we could control with higher tolerances was the smoothness of the action. We also wanted to make it as pristine as possible."

This indigenous AK is made of U.S. parts—except for two—and is built in South Carolina. The rear trunnion is similar to the Russian design with the curved radius on the back. It is cast and machined

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Couldn't get a better recommendation: *"I made the mistake of taking another cheaper gunsmithing course. I knew I made a mistake when I read in one of my lesson books that for further instructional help, go to the AGI website and get a DVD on the subject. When other schools are giving YOU that kind of acknowledgement, then you have to be the best." Gordon Fisher*

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The PSAK-47's front sight is a traditional AK-style unit with a post that is protected by sturdy, curved "wings" while still being easy to adjust for both windage and elevation.

outside the U.S., but it is finished here in the U.S. It is slightly modified on the PSAK-47 so it more easily accepts different types of furniture. We all know that depending on the origin of an AK, aftermarket furniture may or may not work. PSA also uses the Bulgarian bolt design. These are the only two parts not manufactured in the U.S. All the rest are either made by PSA, made by a PSA partner or provided through a vetted supplier. PSA outsourced these two parts while ensuring quality, sourcing them from a Korean-American company and an Israeli company.

The PSAK-47 features a stamped 1045 carbon-steel receiver, 1mm thick and heat-treated. A mil-spec, double-hook trigger is used along with a standard magazine release. A side mount allows a user to mount a scope. The 16.2-inch, 4150 steel barrel is Melonite treated and has six-groove rifling with a 1-in-9.5-inch twist. The classic slanted muzzle brake is screwed onto the muzzle. The rifle's sights are also traditionally classic, with an 800-meter rear sight and adjustable front sight. A cleaning rod is also included.

The PSAK-47 MOE Edition is completely tricked out in Magpul furniture. This includes a fixed MOE AK stock with a 12.8-inch length of pull, an MOE AK handguard with a larger gripping area than the classic handguard and an integrated heat shield, as well as an MOE AK grip with improved ergonomics over a standard mil-spec grip and an aggressive pebbled texture for enhanced control.

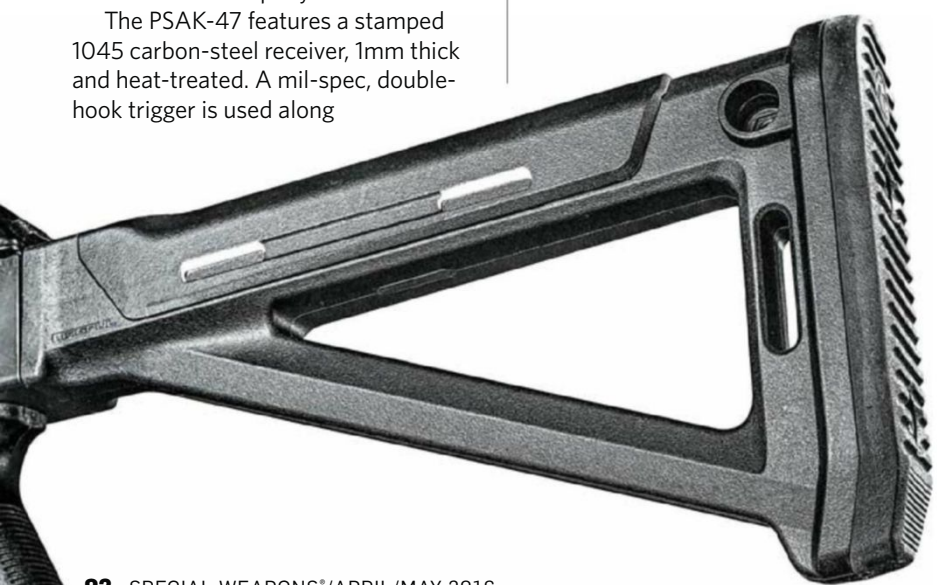
PERFORMANCE

PSAK-47 MOE EDITION

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
Hornady 123 SST	2,144	3.67
Winchester 123 SP	2,212	4.00
Wolf 122 HP	2,428	3.50

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in fps by chronograph and accuracy in inches for best three-shot groups at 100 yards.

"Larry Vickers gave the PSAK-47 high praise, calling it the 'Cadillac of AKs.'"



The PSAK-47 also comes with a 30-round Magpul PMAG. With Magpul furniture, the AK loses a bit of weight and becomes more of a contemporary carbine. A classic wood-stocked AK weighs close to 8 pounds while the Magpul Edition is lithe at 6.8 pounds. The PSAK-47 had better balance and I could control it better during rapid fire. The shorter length of pull also means that if you train in full kit, the rifle is still comfortable to fire. The fit and finish were superb.

Target In Sight

Since PSA offers side mounts on its AKs, I opted to mount a red-dot optic, which makes an excellent close- to mid-range sight—right in the AK platform's sweet spot. Kalinka Optics offers a variety of surplus and new Russian-built optics, and the PK-01 VS red dot is just like the kind in use with Russian special operations forces.

The PK-01 VS is a simple, no-nonsense red dot that's as rugged as a tank and is compatible with nearly any AK or AK variant. It features a 1-MOA red-dot reticle with eight brightness settings. Elevation and windage directions are in both Russian and English, so I didn't have to rely on my high-school Russian—or what I remembered of it—to zero in the PSA. The optic's turrets are open, which is typical of Russian-designed military optics. It also runs off one AA battery. To install, just run the scope mount over the side mount of the PSAK-47's receiver and it clamps down tight.

Using an assortment of surplus and U.S. factory ammo, I wanted to be sure the PSAK-47 would run on whatever ammo it was fed. I also didn't wait for a sunny sky to fire the rifle. The rain was hard, heavy and unending. I took the PSAK-47 in the rain and popped off a few magazines. The PSAK-47, equipped with the PK-01 VS red dot, ran without a hitch.

For more precision work, I waited for the rain to end. Warming the AK up at 25 yards again showed me that PSA had delivered on the goods. In rapid fire, it ran smooth, with none of the clunky cycling issues I've experience with some AKs. Setting out a target at 100 yards and using a rest, the PK-01 VS's red-dot reticle filled the bullseye of the target. While it hardly possesses a "target trigger," I was still able to get decent accuracy out of the rifle. I had no issues while running the rifle. The bolt was smooth to operate and magazine insertion was sure, providing a confident *click* every time.

PSA's aim is to make the AK affordable while still producing a reliable and quality product that shooters will be proud to own. The PSAK-47s MOE Edition will cause AK enthusiasts to take notice—not only because it is made in the U.S., but also because of the way PSA sets up the rifles and, more importantly, how they perform. For more information, visit palmettostatearmory.com or call 803-724-6950. SW

Real Avid AK Cleaning Tools



Gun Boss AK-47



AK-47 Scraper



AK-47 Micro Tool



AK-47 Smart Mat



AK-47 Field Guide

When your AK needs to be cleaned, Real Avid has you covered. The Gun Boss AK-47 is a complete cleaning kit with a six-piece cleaning rod, a bore brush, a gas tube brush, a drift pin punch with a gas port scraper tip, and more—all in a zippered nylon pouch. The AK-47 Scraper is designed to scrape off the carbon that builds up on the unique surfaces of an AK like the piston shaft, face and grooves, as well as the bolt face. It comes with built-in tools that assist opening the gas tube lever and a muzzle brake wrench.

Small and compact, the AK-47 Micro Tool is a keychain with a gas piston face and a piston shaft scraper, front sight adjuster, pin puncher and bottle opener. Keeping parts together on your work top surface clean can be difficult, and the AK-47 Smart Mat makes maintenance easier with a 43-by-16-inch, padded, oil-resistant mat that has illustrated disassembly instructions printed on the surface. AK disassembly is made infinitely easier with the AK-47 Field Guide, a color-coded disassembly instruction manual with detailed diagrams that are oil and solvent resistant. For more information, visit realavid.com or call 800-286-0567.

—Robert A. Sadowski



LEVERAGING POWER



TODAY'S BEST BIG-BORE LEVER ACTIONS WITH UNSTOPPABLE, BRUSH-BUSTING POWER!



BY PETER SUCIU

BENJAMIN TYLER HENRY can be credited with inventing the first lever-action rifle in 1860. The Henry, as it was known, was among the first repeating rifles, and it saw extensive use in the American Civil War and later at the Battle of the Little Bighorn, where its purported use by the Sioux helped lead to the destruction of the 7th Cavalry, who weren't armed with such modern repeating rifles.

The original lever-action rifles of the latter half of the 19th century were blackpowder cartridge firearms, and hence had large bores to match those early cartridges, but today's powerhouse lever rifles offer bores that few would want to stare down. These big-bore rifles are often used to take down large game and more. In fact, the term "big bore" is believed to have come from Africa, where big-game hunters would carry these types of rifles because they were the only ones truly up to the task at hand.



"...Marlin's tried-and-true Model 1895 in .45-70 is more than just a classic—it's downright timeless!"

ROSSI R92 CARBINE

This Rossi lever action packs 10+1 rounds of hard-hitting .44 Magnum ammunition—more than enough to get the job done in a hurry. The R92 Carbine in .44 Magnum also weighs just 5.6 pounds unloaded. It is a reliable firearm with an attractive stainless steel finish that can stand up to harsh elements, while its ultra-slick lever action means shooters won't have to take their eyes off the target. All of this makes for a carbine that is ideal for brush hunting and trekking deep into wilderness. (rossiusa.com; 800-948-8029)

SPECS

CALIBER:	.44 Magnum
BARREL:	20 inches
OA LENGTH:	37.88 inches
WEIGHT:	5.6 pounds (empty)
STOCK:	Wood
SIGHTS:	Front post, adjustable rear
ACTION:	Lever
FINISH:	Stainless
CAPACITY:	10+1
MSRP:	$651



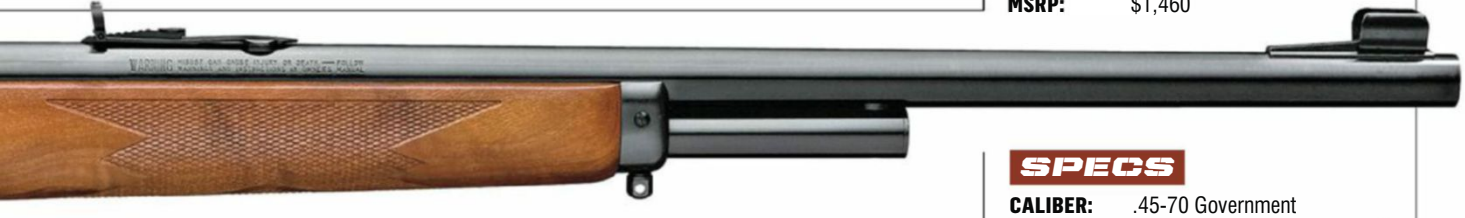


WINCHESTER MODEL 94 TRAIL'S END TAKEDOWN

Oliver Winchester's Model 1873 may have "won the West," but he refined it with the Model 1894. Today this same model is a solid choice for big-game hunting, especially in brushier and tighter conditions where a bolt-action rifle simply won't do. The Model 94 Trail's End Takedown is available in .450 Marlin and offers a steel loading gate for smoother loading and an articulated cartridge stop that improves feeding. This lever action is drilled and tapped for scope mounts to let you make shots at long range as well. (winchesterguns.com)

SPECS

CALIBER:	.450 Marlin
BARREL:	20 inches
OA LENGTH:	38 inches
WEIGHT:	6.75 pounds (empty)
STOCK:	Walnut
SIGHTS:	Marble front and rear
ACTION:	Lever
FINISH:	Blued
CAPACITY:	6+1
MSRP:	$1,460



MARLIN CLASSIC MODEL 1895

Few products that were "classic" in 1895 would be considered anything but outdated by today's standards, but Marlin's tried-and-true Model 1895 in .45-70 is more than just a classic—it's downright timeless! The rifle features a 22-inch barrel with deep-cut Ballard-type rifling and an American black walnut pistol-grip stock with cut checkering and swivel studs. This Classic Model 1895 might live up to its name even in 2095 and beyond. (marlinfirearms.com; 800-554-8892)

SPECS

CALIBER:	.45-70 Government
BARREL:	22 inches
OA LENGTH:	40.5 inches
WEIGHT:	7.5 pounds (empty)
STOCK:	Walnut
SIGHTS:	Bead front, adjustable rear
ACTION:	Lever
FINISH:	Matte black
CAPACITY:	4+1
MSRP:	$640



CIMARRON MODEL 71 HOGZILLA KILLA

While no big-bore lever rifle will take down a mythical monster, the Cimarron Model 71 Hogzilla Killa might just be the one to give it a try. The Model 71 line is based on the Winchester Model 1886 and offers equal parts strength, reliability and eye-catching beauty. The Hogzilla Killa sports a traditional pistol-grip stock, an adjustable semi-buckhorn rear sight and a European walnut stock. It packs quite a big punch in a relatively small package. (cimarron-firearms.com; 877-749-4861)

SPECS

CALIBER:	.45-70 Government
BARREL:	19 inches
OA LENGTH:	38.5 inches
WEIGHT:	7.69 pounds (empty)
STOCK:	Walnut
SIGHTS:	Fiber-optic front, scope rail
ACTION:	Lever
FINISH:	Blued
CAPACITY:	5+1
MSRP:	$1,847



BIG HORN ARMORY MODEL 90A

Big Horn Armory produces its Model 90A to chamber the .454 Casull with a 17-4 stainless steel barreled action that is properly hardened to deliver downrange performance year after year. Several stock options are available, including walnut, maple or a laminate version . The rifle is fitted with front and rear sling swivel mounts, a curved lever for easy operation with gloves, a rear aperture sight, a front post sight and a pistol-grip stock with a 1-inch-thick buttpad to help absorb recoil. (bighornarmory.com; 307-586-3700)

SPECS

CALIBER:	.454 Casull
BARREL:	18 or 22 inches
OA LENGTH:	41 inches
WEIGHT:	8.34 pounds (empty)
STOCK:	Walnut, maple, laminate
SIGHTS:	Front blade, aperture rear
ACTION:	Lever
FINISH:	Stainless, Hunter black, casehardened
CAPACITY:	8+1
MSRP:	$2,949- $4,349

"The original lever-action rifles...were blackpowder cartridge firearms...but today's powerhouse lever rifles offer bores that few would want to stare down."



CHIAPPA 1886 KODIAK

For those who don't want basic gun metal with their lever-action rifle, the Chiappa 1886 Kodiak offers a fine mix of comfort and aesthetics. The stock and forend wood has "soft touch" paint with a layer of matte black rubber that provides a firm yet pleasant grip, while the rubber buttplate will help absorb the rifle's .45-70 Government recoil. The receiver, bolt, lever and barrel are protected from corrosion and rust—and even fingerprints—via a special hard chrome treatment that provides an opaque finish and will look good year after year of rugged use. (chiappafirearms.com)

SPECS

CALIBER:	.45-70 Government
BARREL:	18 inches
OA LENGTH:	37 inches
WEIGHT:	7 pounds (empty)
STOCK:	Soft-touch wood
SIGHTS:	Skinner
ACTION:	Lever
FINISH:	Hard chrome
CAPACITY:	4+1
MSRP:	$1,969

"In fact, the term 'big bore'...comes from Africa, where big-game hunters would carry these types of rifles because they were the only ones truly up to the task..."



HENRY .45-70 LEVER ACTION

Dubbed "the choice of big-game hunters," Henry's .45-70 Lever Action (Model H010) is capable of handling even the largest game in North America. It features a blued steel receiver with a round, 18.43-inch barrel and a tubular magazine with a four-round capacity. The pistol-grip stock and steel-capped forend are crafted from American walnut and cut with checkering for a sure grip to help shooters make every shot. A version with an octagonal barrel is also available. (henryrifles.com; 201-858-4400)

SPECS

CALIBER:	.45-70 Government
BARREL:	18.43 inches
OA LENGTH:	39 inches
WEIGHT:	7.08 pounds (empty)
STOCK:	Walnut
SIGHTS:	Bead front, adjustable rear
ACTION:	Lever
FINISH:	Matte black
CAPACITY:	4+1
MSRP:	$850

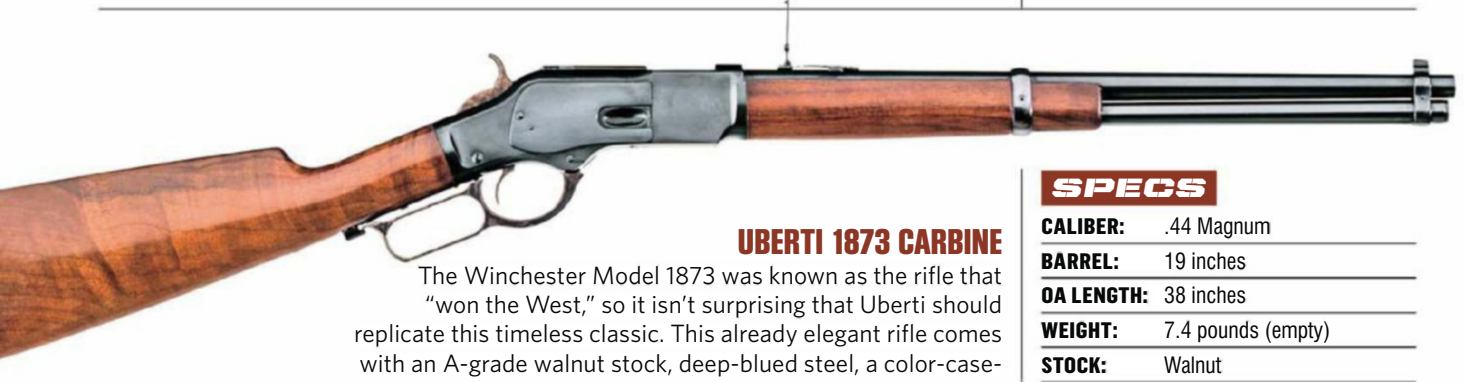


TAYLOR'S 1892 ALASKAN TAKE-DOWN

Should you answer the call of the wild, you may want to have the 1892 Alaskan Take-Down from Taylor's & Co. Firearms at your side. It combines a traditional design with modern technology, and the result is a fast-handling lever action that is designed specifically for today's hunters. While the version shown is a .44 Magnum with a 16-inch barrel, a 20-inch barrel is also available as well as a .357 Magnum version with a 16-inch barrel. (taylorsfirearms.com; 540-722-2017)

SPECS

CALIBER:	.44 Magnum, .357 Magnum
BARREL:	16 or 20 inches
OA LENGTH:	34-38 inches
WEIGHT:	5.9 pounds (empty)
STOCK:	Soft-touch wood
SIGHTS:	Front post, Skinner rear
ACTION:	Lever
FINISH:	Matte chrome
CAPACITY:	7+1
MSRP:	$1,366



UBERTI 1873 CARBINE

The Winchester Model 1873 was known as the rifle that "won the West," so it isn't surprising that Uberti should replicate this timeless classic. This already elegant rifle comes with an A-grade walnut stock, deep-blued steel, a color-case-hardened lever and hammer, and fully adjustable sights. It also comes supercharged in the powerful .44 Magnum so today's cowboys can enjoy it not only for target shooting, defense and competition, but also for big-game hunting at moderate ranges. This carbine combines history and technology to evoke the Wild West in all its glory. (uberti.com; 800-264-4962) SW

SPECS

CALIBER:	.44 Magnum
BARREL:	19 inches
OA LENGTH:	38 inches
WEIGHT:	7.4 pounds (empty)
STOCK:	Walnut
SIGHTS:	Front post, adjustable rear
ACTION:	Lever
FINISH:	Blued
CAPACITY:	9+1
MSRP:	$1,309

RANGE MASTER

FN'S 12-GAUGE SLP COMPETITION delivers cutting-edge scattergun performance!

BY DAVE NORMAN
PHOTOS BY ALEX LANDEEN



SPECS

FN SLP COMPETITION	
Gauge:	12; 3-inch chamber
Barrel:	24 inches
OA Length:	45.6 inches
Weight:	7.5 pounds (empty)
Stock:	Synthetic
Sights:	Fiber-optic front, flip-up lead rear
Action:	Semi-auto
Finish:	Hardcoat anodized blue
Capacity:	8+1
MSRP:	$1,449



FN's aptly named SLP Competiton provides 12-gauge power, semi-auto speed and proven accuracy to win any 3-Gun match.

With the berm cratered by nine slugs and our silhouette targets devastated with comically oversized holes, it was time to dust some flying clay—and give my shoulder a little break from high-brass punishment. The shotgun didn't care what we fed it, but after 400 rounds, I sure did.

It was a good day, despite a few hiccups, and in the end I learned a thing or two. Here are those lessons, along with a breakdown of FN America's 12-gauge Self-Loading Police (SLP) Competition shotgun.

Military Roots

FN America is the stateside subsidiary of the Belgian Herstal Group, which traces its roots to *Fabrique Nationale d'Herstal* (or FN Herstal as it's known today), a company founded in the late 19th century to produce rifles for the Belgian military. The company has had close relations with the Belgian government, and increasingly more European governments (and ours) ever since. Its facility in Columbia, South Carolina, is the U.S. place of manufacture for the military hardware sold to the U.S. government, including the M4/M4A1 and M16 rifles, the MK46, MK48, and M249 SAW machine guns, and even MK19 grenade launchers.

Through FN's network of factories and assembling plants around the world, which it shares with fellow subsidiaries Browning and U.S. Repeating Arms (Winchester Arms), the company also produces a range of tactical shotguns. According to a barrel stamp, my sample SLP Competition was assembled in Portugal by Browning. It ended up in my hands for a very strenuous field test.

Self-Loading Police

The Self-Loading Police shotgun debuted in 2008. After earning several prestigious awards, it made its way into the hands to local and federal law enforcement personnel, armed citizens and competitors. The M4-style front and rear sights (with the former affixed atop a post elevating it above the muzzle) helped accurately deliver slugs downrange, and the 6+1 capacity recommended it for true tactical work as a primary weapon.

Then came the SLP Tactical variant with a pistol-grip stock. Competitors, and some armed professionals, wanted a version with a little extra firepower, more minimalist sights (the M4-style sights obscure moving targets) and interchangeable chokes. Enter the MK I, with its 22-inch barrel, 8+1 capacity and a lack of M4-style sights in favor of a fiber-optic front sight and a rear leaf sight. The company also released a tactical variant with a pistol-grip stock—all of which led to the development of the SLP Competition.





1. The loading port is relieved for easier loading, especially in "load two" or "load four" style.

2. The fiber-optic front sight is easy to acquire, and the top of the vent rib has serrations to help reduce glare.

3. The adjustable, leaf-style rear sight flips up easily for enhanced precision—a boon for slug shooting.

4. Shooters can quickly fold the SLP Competition's rear sight down, flush with the vent rib, to easily track moving targets.

Three Gunning

The FN SLP Competition shotgun is a good example of gear updated from police and military hardware to civilian sporting equipment tuned specifically for fast-paced, high-volume shooting, as epitomized by the 3-Gun competitions regularly attended by FN America's competition team. With their direct input, as well as feedback from other top athletes, FN's designers set out to adapt the Self-Loading Police to the competitive world. They succeeded.

It's normal for 3-Gun competitors to fire 100 or more rounds in a competition—and to have that round count include #7 ½ birdshot, buckshot and slugs. Often on the same stage. Often alternating back and forth. Frequently at different ranges.

This would drive a traditional shotgun shooter mad and over-tax their equipment. Thus, successful 3-Gun shotguns must handle a magazine tube full of a mix of birdshot, slugs and buckshot, being able to fire all three types of ammo at a time without jamming. The FN SLP Competition shotgun I tested did all of this and a lot more.

The SLP Competition retains the gas operating system found throughout the SLP line along with the rifle-style synthetic stock and generously oversized handguard with extremely positive checkering. New to this model is the vent rib that runs down the length of the 24-inch-long barrel for dissipating heat mirage. We sent a box of birdshot downrange as fast as we could fire and reload, and this vent rib worked as well as one could hope.

Also new is a flip-up rear leaf sight with graduated markings for helping get slugs to center-mass at longer ranges. There has been a move away from tactical-style sights on competition shotguns back towards the traditional-for-shotguns front bead (which cannot properly be called a sight). This has to do with field of view: Tactical-style sights can obstruct too much, especially when trying to track and lead a moving target, while the bead is ideal for the shotgun's traditional role against moving targets. The SLP Competition has such a bead, and the rear leaf sight folds forward into an opening on the vent rib, where it rides out of the way as you blast moving targets. If you want it to help you put slugs downrange or take down poppers, you can easily flip it up with the thumb of your support hand.

Shotgun stages—indeed, whole matches—can be won through shotgun reloading speed. There are few things slower than reloading a shotgun, but competitors using the "load two" or "quad load" technique can cut this time drastically. To help them, the SLP Competition has an enlarged loading port, and the cartridge lift is milled so you can push your thumb into the magazine tube to seat the last cartridge, and retrieve your thumb again without snagging yourself. These details are absolutely crucial to a modern 3-Gun shotgun, and work wonderfully on the SLP Competition.

The SLP Competition's design is extremely well thought out from first to last. But how does it shoot?

Torture Test Survivor

Testing began at the trap and skeet range, where the SLP Competition came up to bear like a dream and tracked targets smoothly. The receiver is made of milled aluminum for a balance of

strength and light weight, and the light weight resulted in fast handling and very little overswing.

The SLP strikes many balances. Lightweight shotguns kick like mules, which slows down follow-up shots. Heavy shotguns push more than kick, but are slower in handling. By using its short-stroke gas operating system, FN has engineered a system that actually soaks up some recoil energy, lessening the perceived recoil, while the synthetic stock and handguard and aluminum receiver help lighten the overall shotgun. That's how you get a 45.6-inch-long shotgun that weighs only 7.5 pounds, and which magically doesn't kick like a mule. This was particularly appreciated as I eclipsed 250 rounds on the trap range in under two hours.

My test SLP Competition shipped with an Invector Plus extended choke tube in Improved Cylinder size, which should be capable of handling any of the shot and slugs that the 3-inch magnum receiver can chamber. It's not the best choke for trap—a modified or light-full choke would have been better—but it's dynamite for skeet and blasting the kinds of clay targets frequently encountered at 3-Gun matches. With the Invector Plus choke system, you can switch chokes to suit individual stages.



Dave Norman Photo

Another balance is found in how the SLP's operating system handles the pressures associated with high-brass, 3-inch magnum cartridges as well as low-brass birdshot cartridges without users having to change out any pistons, springs, plugs or other components. The SLP Competition chewed through a number of Federal high-brass #6 hunting loads (which are great for swinging heavy spinner targets) along with all of the slugs and buckshot we fed it.

The Winchester, Federal and Remington slugs still kicked pretty hard but flew straight and printed groups that suggest excellent accuracy beyond our test shooters' abilities.

A significant amount of buckshot went downrange from Winchester, Federal, and some odds and ends from the gear bag, all to tremendous effect. At 10 yards, the pellets generally stayed in a 6-inch circle—big enough to give you some margin of error on steel plates and tight enough to give you multiple steel-toppling hits when you do your part while firing.

I loaded a few magazine tubes with a random combination of slugs, buckshot and birdshot—a cringe-worthy test for any upland wingshooter's gun, but a good representation of a day at the range for a 3-Gun shotgun—and was happy to see that even mixed loads from mixed manufacturers fired with a reliable cadence.

FN's previous SLP models ship with two gas pistons—one for target loads and light-recoiling defense cartridges, the other for full-power loads up to 3-inch magnums. The SLP Competition, though, ships with a middle-ground "competition" piston—basically the heavier-load piston designed to work with the hotter end of the lighter-load spectrum as well. This explains how it handled the 3-inch magnum turkey loads we put through it along with 1,600-fps slugs on down to the Federal target loads that push 1 ounce of shot downrange at approximately 1,250 fps.

— *Continued on page 128*

"TESTING BEGAN AT THE TRAP AND SKEET RANGE, WHERE THE SLP CAME UP TO BEAR LIKE A DREAM AND TRACKED TARGETS SMOOTHLY."





FAR LEFT: The competition-tuned trigger rides in a guard that's slightly oversized for use with shooting gloves.

LEFT: FN ships the shotgun with a thick rubber buttpad to help absorb some of the 12-gauge recoil.

The SUB Standard



How the HK MP5 defined a generation of submachine guns.

BY FRED MASTISON

The world of counterterrorism is often cloaked in shadows and rarely visible to the average person. That changed in early May of 1980. The world watched after an Arab separatist group from the Khuzestan Province of Iran stormed the Iranian embassy in South Kensington, London. After negotiations failed and the terrorists executed a hostage, Margaret Thatcher picked up a phone and called in the SAS. The elite British counterterror team assaulted the embassy in broad daylight in front of assembled journalists and pedestrians. They rappelled from the rooftop dressed in black, wearing gas masks and carrying submachine guns. The team entered through the embassy's windows, skylights and doors. In the following 17 minutes, the SAS succeeded in freeing all but one of the remaining hostages, killing five of the six terrorists and capturing the sixth. Just as quickly as they appeared, the SAS vanished back into the shadows following what would become known as Operation Nimrod. But images were captured of the counterterror team carrying a unique submachine gun would be forever etched into people's minds. That now-iconic submachine gun was the MP5.

Behind The MP5

The MP5 is the brainchild and treasure of German gun-maker Heckler & Koch. Officially the "*Maschinenpistole 5*," the MP5 is a 9mm submachine gun that began its life in 1964. Eventually designated the MP5A1, this lightweight and reliable submachine gun would see service in 40 different nations for military, law enforcement and security applications over the years.

The MP5 originated in West Germany as the HK54 as part of Project 64. The project was based on the proven design and function of the 7.62mm NATO HK G3 battle rifle. The design team of Tilo Moller, Manfred Guhring and Halmut Baureuter worked for two years to create a reliable submachine gun using the same roller-locked, delayed-blowback action of the parent weapon. Their attention to detail paid off. In a time where most submachine guns fired from an open bolt, the MP5 was designed for improved accuracy by firing from a closed bolt. No more bolt slamming forward and shifting the balance of the gun. Small submachine guns were notorious for being difficult to manage on target. The MP5 would set a new standard for subgun accuracy. The MP5's proven roller-delayed blowback action is tremendously reliable, modular, extremely accurate and extraordinarily easy to control when firing.

Notable Variants

According to Heckler & Koch, there are currently over 100 versions of the MP5 in production. It can be almost dizzying to keep track. The primary difference between most versions are stock style, overall length and trigger pack design. While a breakdown of all of the versions could fill this entire magazine, we will look at a few that stand out. The most widely seen version is the MP5A2. This is the full-sized gun with a fixed stock. It comes with the "SEF" trigger

"...this lightweight and reliable submachine gun would see service in 40 different nations for military, law enforcement and security applications."



group, which includes safe, semi-auto and full-auto fire control positions. These are the versions most commonly used by law enforcement and security teams around the world.

Next up is the MP5K. The "K" stands for the German word for short—"*kurz*." This version of the MP5 is almost legend. It was designed for close-quarters battle with clandestine operations and special services. The MP5K does not have a shoulder stock, and the bolt and receiver were shortened at the rear. The resulting lighter bolt led to a higher rate of fire than the standard MP5. The barrel, cocking handle and its cover were shortened and a vertical foregrip was used to replace the standard handguard. The barrel ends at the base of the front sight, which prevents the use of any sort of muzzle device. This is also the MP5 that was designed to fit and operate inside a special briefcase.

Almost as recognizable as the "K" version is the MP5SD. This MP5 variant

— *Continued on page 129*



The MP5SD is easy to identify because of its integral and detachable suppressor, which helps the platform remain compact and covert, and does not require subsonic ammo.

"Mating the new bolt group with the existing improvements of the IC platform provided what may just be the perfect carbine."



LWRCI's new IC-DI delivers capable direct-impingement performance at a very good price. Shown with a Trijicon SRS sight.

Sean Utley Photo

After testing several LWRC International rifles, they have become some of my favorites. I'm a fan of the 6.8 SPC, and I've spent many hours and thousands of rounds behind the company's piston-driven Six8 rifles using various barrel lengths. Recent testing of LWRCI's 5.56mm IC-PSD variant of the Individual Carbine (IC) platform was an eye-opening experience. I took it to a couple training courses and tested it for hours on my home range, and it ran everything I put through it, including some frangible ammunition that choked every other rifle I've used it in.

Professionals, law enforcement officers and discerning buyers have long sought out LWRCI when looking for a workingman's rifle. Built to high standards and designed for hard use, they are among the most dependable and reliable carbines on the market. Their only drawback is cost—like any quality product, especially a piston-driven carbine, they are not cheap. Piston-driven rifles have more parts and tend to weigh more. For those with no need



DIRECT FROM LWRCI

Meet LWRCI's first direct-impingement AR—the tank-tough, 5.56mm IC-DI.

BY DAVID BAHDE

for a piston system, direct-impingement (DI) ARs are a great option. What we needed was a DI rifle from LWRCI, and the company has come through with the 5.56mm IC-DI.

A Closer Look

The IC-DI starts with LWRCI's proven "double coined" upper and lower receivers, which are forged from 7075-T6 aluminum. They're easily some of the strongest receivers you can buy. Like all IC rifles, the lower receiver sports ambi-dextrous controls and an oversized triggerguard. A Magpul MOE+ grip is installed for enhanced control, while the LWRCI Compact stock makes it easy to use the IC-DI while wearing plate carriers or other duty gear. The lower's internals, including the trigger, are mil-spec.

The upper receiver features a 16.1-inch, cold-hammer-forged barrel with a 1-in-7-inch twist rate, M4 feed ramps and a 5.56mm NATO chamber. The barrel is also fluted for reduced weight and improved cooling. Out front is an A2-style flash suppressor. The barrel is made from 41V45 steel and coated in NiCorr for longevity and corrosion resistance. Gas is delivered to the enhanced DI bolt carrier group using a NiCorr-coated gas tube.

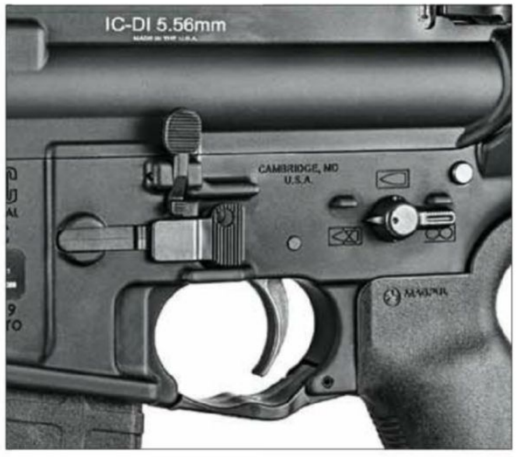
Surrounding the barrel and gas system is a slim, 12-inch handguard developed specifically for the IC-DI rifle. Attaching solidly at the receiver, it allows the barrel to float freely. Rails can be attached along the 3, 6 and 9 o'clock positions. The continuous top rail facilitates sights and other accessories. Rail panels were provided with my test rifle along with the company's Angled Foregrip. It also came with two accessory rails: a short one for lights or lasers and an angled rail that includes a quick-detach (QD) sling cup. There is also a QD sling cup on the back of the Angled Foregrip. Each rifle ships with a single Magpul PMAG.

Top Training

Headed to the San Antonio Texas area for some extra long-range training put me in the neighborhood for a Lights, Sights & Lasers Tour stop. Taught by my friend and colleague Wes Doss, it focuses on police encounters in low and failing light conditions. It includes half a day of class-



Surrounding the barrel and DI gas system is a free-floating handguard that allows shooters to add accessory rails where needed along the sides and bottom.





The lower receiver features fully ambidextrous controls and an extended triggerguard, while the upper houses LWRCI's enhanced bolt carrier group for optimum reliability in harsh conditions.

room training and about four hours on the range with a carbine.

I decided to add a few things to the IC-DI based on my experience. I added a Trijicon MRO in a brand-new AXTS mount. This sight has proven excellent with a less obstructed view. The controls are easy to access, and it is rugged yet lightweight. The precision-machined AXTS is very sleek, easy to use and strong. This mount placed the LWRCI backup sights I added in the lower third of the MRO's lens. Another addition was LaRue Tactical's MBT-2S trigger. I prefer two-stage triggers, and LaRue's is one of the best. It's smooth with a wider and slightly flatter shoe. It's also easy to install with a captured sear while offering a 2.5-pound first stage and a crisp 2-pound second stage. My final change was a Primary Weapons Systems Triad flash suppressor. It has proven to all but eliminate flash on any 16-inch-barreled carbine.

I also added a SureFire Scout light in a LaRue Tactical light mount. Finally, I added a Vickers sling from Blue Force Gear. I used several 5.56mm loads from various manufacturers for ammunition.

Wes Doss focuses on fast target acquisitions from unconventional starting positions. Rather than start amped up in a standard position, you start with the rifle hanging from its sling. Then you engage targets under stress at close range (from 5 to 20 yards) using only your backup sights—sighting through or over your reflex sight if you have one. There was also a shootout among students where the winner walked away with over $1,000 in prizes. The MRO really shined here because of its wide field of view. This was my fifth time through this training with various rifles and reflex sights, and the MRO was the fastest I've used to date.

The IC-DI's ambidextrous controls came in handy. I recently injured my strong hand, so I had to alter how I normally operate the safety. The IC lower uses a pinned safety with standard-sized levers on both sides. This allowed me to run the rifle with my strong-hand thumb forward throughout the drills, which isn't my preference for CQB situations. But this was less painful while still being fast. The LaRue trigger

SPECS

LWRCI IC-DI	
Caliber:	5.56mm NATO
Barrel:	16.1 inches
OA Length:	32-35.25 inches
Weight:	6.7 pounds (empty)
Stock:	Collapsible
Sights:	None
Action:	Direct impingement semi-auto
Finish:	Matte black
Capacity:	30+1
MSRP:	$1,600





once again shined. Smooth and crisp, it allowed for control when needed and speed when necessary. It has not failed when used in four different rifles, including the IC-DI. All in all, the carbine ran well and never missed a beat.

Range Testing

Back at my home range, I measured the IC-DI's accuracy after reinstalling its factory trigger. I was able to produce groups under an inch, with the best measuring just over 0.6 inches using Barnes' 70-grain TSX ammo. The IC-DI was plenty accurate. Moving to a nice two-stage trigger will likely improve things, but for a duty-ready rifle, this is more than adequate.

Donning a Velocity Systems plate carrier, the short stock proved invaluable. My arms are short to begin with, and standard stocks just extend my arms too far. LWRCI's short stock makes it possible to keep the rifle squarely in my workspace for reloads and other quick manipulations.

The ambidextrous controls were a boon, and it was good practice to primarily use my left side. Having the bolt release on both sides allowed me to use a couple different reloading methods. The carbine ran smoothly, even inside my range's shoothouse. Because of my strong-side injury, I mostly used the IC-DI from my left side during the entry practice, with the SureFire light's tape switch mounted on top of the handguard for easy access. Having the light on the left side also meant that it cleared obstacles first when working around corners.

Moving around my FJ Cruiser took a bit of work considering I'm used to



The IC-DI features a fluted barrel (above left) and a long top rail (above) for adding sights and optics. LWRCI's Angled Foregrip (left) provides a solid hold as well as an ambidextrous sling-attachment point.

resting my left side on the bumper, for example. Once again, the ambidextrous controls really helped. It was possible to operate the safety easily. The safety levers are the same size on both sides of the receiver, making the transition much easier. Those shorter safety levers are great for precision rifles, but not when you need to reach them with your off-side thumb. It took some practice, but after a couple of runs I got the hang of running the IC-DI from my left side, making me quite confident that I could use this rifle effectively in any practical condition.

Accurate & Reliable

The IC-DI never suffered a single malfunction. The ejection patterns were incredibly consistent over several types of ammunition. Even in less conventional shooting positions, brass never hit me in the face. Also, LWRCI's Angled Foregrip is the best I've used so far. It provides excellent control while serving as a stable support against barricades and other objects.

LWRCI is offering the IC-DI for $1,600, which is comparable to other top-tier ARs. And, this model is as good as any top-tier AR I have tested. Short of a custom rifle, it just does not get much better than this. Everyone has their preferences when it comes to features, but everything on this rifle is top notch. More importantly, it is built like a tank with a robust gas block, cold-hammer-forged barrel, forged receivers and an enhanced bolt carrier group. For more, visit lwrci.com or call 410-901-1348. SW

PERFORMANCE

LWRCI IC-DI

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
Barnes 69 Match	2,880	0.75
Barnes 70 TSX	2,800	0.60
Hornady 55 V-MAX	2,950	0.80
Silver State Armory 77 OTM	2,750	1.00
Winchester 69 Match	2,900	0.85

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in fps by chronograph and accuracy in inches for best three-shot groups at 100 yards.

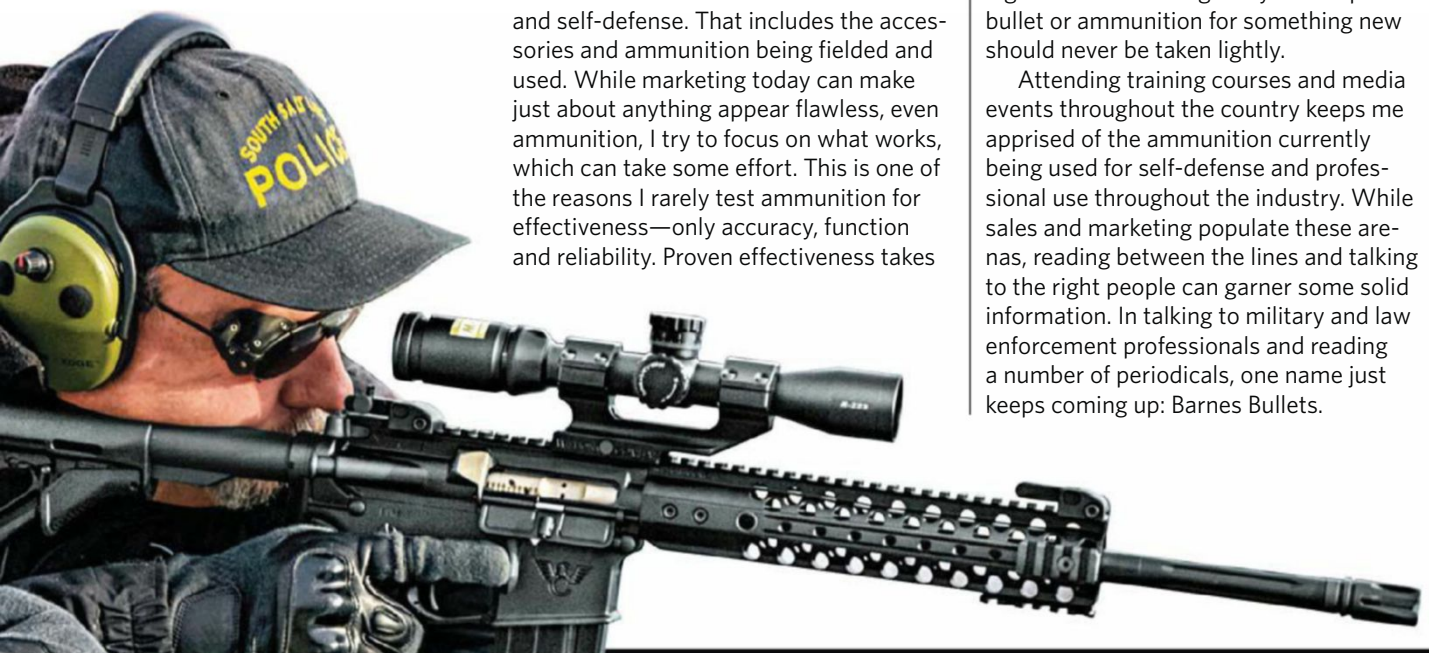
BARNES BULLETS

High-quality pistol and rifle rounds to help you take down any target!

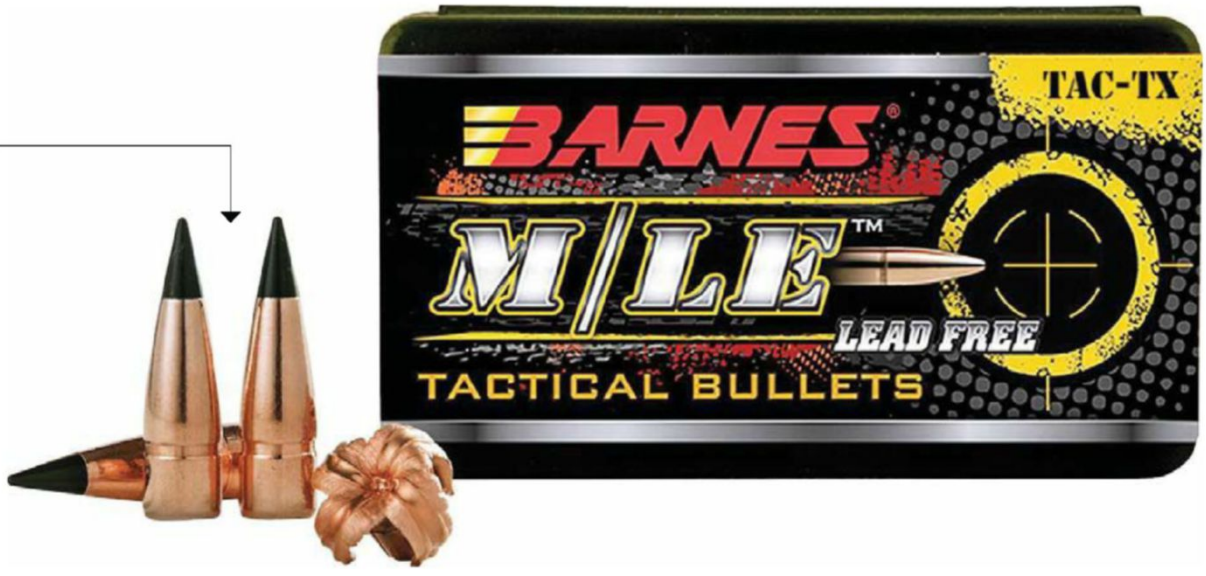
BY DAVID BAHDE

Most of my gun and gear testing tends to lean towards the tactical and self-defense realms. I hunt on occasion, but most of my experience and expertise revolves around firearms used for law enforcement and self-defense. That includes the accessories and ammunition being fielded and used. While marketing today can make just about anything appear flawless, even ammunition, I try to focus on what works, which can take some effort. This is one of the reasons I rarely test ammunition for effectiveness—only accuracy, function and reliability. Proven effectiveness takes real-world use and cannot be done properly in a day. Besides, it's just not prudent to change ammunition without good reason. I've lived through the process as a police administrator, and it was a nightmare. So moving away from a proven bullet or ammunition for something new should never be taken lightly.

Attending training courses and media events throughout the country keeps me apprised of the ammunition currently being used for self-defense and professional use throughout the industry. While sales and marketing populate these arenas, reading between the lines and talking to the right people can garner some solid information. In talking to military and law enforcement professionals and reading a number of periodicals, one name just keeps coming up: Barnes Bullets.



"Barnes' 150- and 168-grain TTSX loads...have caught the attention of tactical teams, police departments and smaller military units."



Barnes Goes Tactical

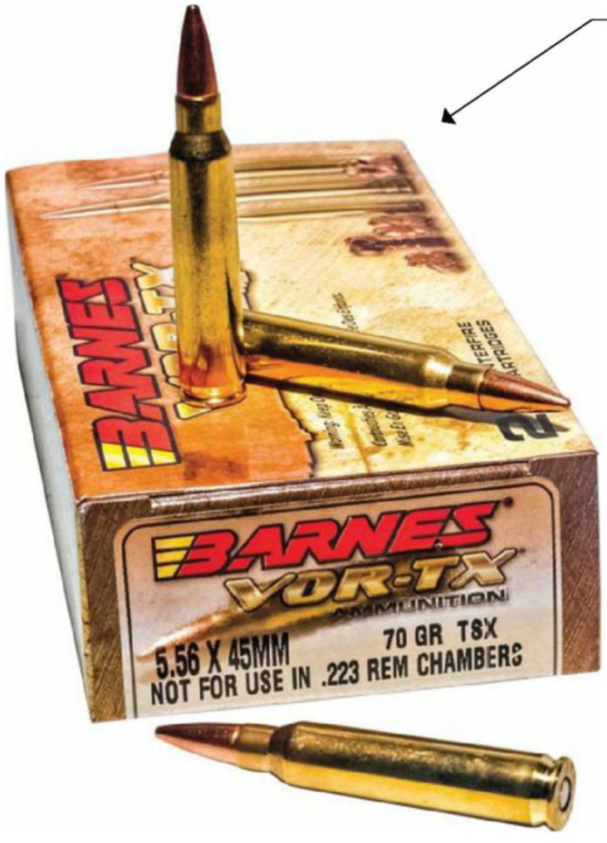
Barnes Bullets is not new to the industry—just the tactical and self-defense worlds. It seemed every time I turned around someone was telling me how well a Barnes TAC-X or TAC-TX bullet was performing both in testing and in the field. The company's 110-grain TAC-TX is loaded extensively in 300 Blackout ammunition by some of the best manufacturers on the market. Many agencies are moving to Barnes' 62- and 70-grain TSX bullets in 5.56mm NATO. I recently tested a DoubleTap .223 Remington that used Barnes' 55-grain TSX projectiles, and I was impressed with the results, especially out of an 8-inch-barreled entry rifle. Many agencies using .308 Winchester/7.62mm NATO rifles are looking at the 150-grain TTSX.

These bullets are proving very effective when used through barriers, soft targets or anything else. They're accurate and consistent. Designed to expand when necessary while retaining much of their initial weight, they fit perfectly into the current standard for self-defense and law enforcement use. Barnes recently introduced pistol bullets using the same technology, and they're starting to gain some increased attention, too. Barnes' TAC-XP bullets in 9mm, .357 Magnum, 10mm, .40 S&W and .45 ACP are showing up in several custom and self-defense loads. Barnes' 155-grain TAC-XP bullets are loaded in the 10mm 1911 I carry to this day. Just like the rifle bullets, the handgun rounds perform well under most any condition with proven weight retention and predictable expansion. So well in fact that Barnes is now offering these bullets in their own product lines, including the latest TAC-XPD self-defense ammunition.

TAC-XPD Ammo

Barnes' TAC-XPD ammo uses the best possible components, including nickel-coated cases. Each round is gauged to ensure proper feeding. The packaging is completed by hand, adding another level of visual inspection to the process. Regular testing ensures the bullets are performing as designed. Each caliber is tested to provide the best possible penetration depths with complete expansion. The ammunition uses low-flash propellants while operating effectively at extreme temperatures. The most common self-defense chamberings are covered, with TAC-XPD loads in .380 ACP, 9mm +P, .357 Magnum, .40 S&W and .45 ACP +P. I've used the 115-grain TAC-XP in several pistol tests and can attest to its consistent accuracy and reliability across several pistol types. Designed for use in the harshest conditions, the TAC-XPD line meets the needs of professionals and CCW holders alike.





VOR-TX Rounds

Although it's listed as hunting ammunition, much of Barnes' VOR-TX line is well suited to self-defense and professional uses. Barnes' 300 Blackout ammo uses either the 110- or 120-grain TAC-TX bullet, making these loads well suited to most applications. The company's 5.56mm loads using 55-, 62- and 70-grain TSX bullets offer proven penetration, solid expansion and excellent quality. Barnes' 150- and 168-grain TTSX loads in .308 Winchester have proven to be excellent performers at moderate ranges on medium-sized game and have caught the attention of tactical teams, police departments and smaller military units.

"These bullets are proving very effective when used through barriers, soft targets or anything else."

Going The Distance

Barnes Bullets has long been known as a premier maker of proven hunting bullets. Bill Wilson of Wilson Combat has been using these bullets for years at his premier hog-hunting ranch in Texas, with consistent performance across a broad range of calibers. I personally have taken large hogs at his ranch with 6.8 SPC, 7.62x40 WT and .458 SOCOM loads using Barnes' TSX and TTSX bullets.

Barnes has taken its proven experience into the self-defense realm with the TAC-XP pistol bullets and TAC-X and TAC-TX rifle projectiles loaded in TAC-XPD or VOR-TX ammunition. Adding the new OTM line to the mix meets the needs of most anyone looking for ammunition for self-defense or professional use. Next time you are looking for the perfect carry round, make sure you add Barnes Bullets to the top of your list. For more information, visit barnesbullets.com or call 435-856-1000. SW

Precision Match

Military units are often restricted from using controlled expansion bullets. So they typically choose Open-Tipped Match, or OTM, ammo, especially for extended ranges. To this end, Barnes' new Precision Match line is seeing significant success. Its 69- and 85-grain 5.56mm loads offer superb accuracy thanks to trajectory calculations in the development process generated using Doppler radar, the most accurate means to date.

Both the 175-grain .308 Winchester and 220-grain .300 Winchester Magnum loads offer greater energy on target at range. I recently tested Barnes' 300-grain .338 Lapua OTM ammo, and the results were very impressive. Hits on a 12-inch steel target at 1,200 yards were almost boringly consistent. Moving out to just under a mile, I was able to get seven hits out of ten shots on a 36-by-36-inch steel target in less than 10 seconds using the Alexander Arms Ulfberht. Most hits clustered under 12 inches, with three closer to 6 inches. Loaded to precise standards with the best components, Barnes' Precision Match ammo is exactly what it claims to be—precision ammunition loaded to match standards. It's suitable for use by the most elite units, target shooters or competitors.



OWN THE NIGHT

Night-vision gear to keep you in the fight when the lights go out.

BY WILL DABBS, MD



Photo Courtesy Walther

In ages past, darkness meant fear. Good people banded together for protection after the dark, for predators hunt in the night.

Cutting-edge technology now offers the means to dispel the darkness. Mastery of the night is the greatest single tactical advantage U.S. forces have over their adversaries. Nowadays, this same game-changing capability is available to law enforcement agencies and civilians. What follows is a typical cross-section of the tactical tools that will let you own the night.



AN/PVS-15

The AN/PVS-15 is a mil-spec dual-tube night-vision device built with commercial-grade image intensifiers. Dual-tube goggles allow greater depth perception that can be critical for surveillance and recon missions. The Gen 3 AN/PVS-15 operates on a single AA battery, can be handheld or helmet-mounted, and is waterproof to 20 meters. The AN/PVS-15 also has an IR illuminator and a low-battery indicator. The device has a built-in automatic brightness control and weighs 24.3 ounces. These goggles offer no magnification and a 40-degree field of view. (eotechinc.com; 888-368-4656)

BERING OPTICS URBAN PATROL

The Urban Patrol is a lightweight and inexpensive digital night-vision camera built with a specially developed IR sensitive CMOS chip, making it suitable for use in urban environments. The device is tolerant of bright lights that will inevitably be found in urban areas and has built-in video recording capabilities. This device is appropriate for 24-hour video surveillance and offers full color recording. The device runs off of four AA batteries and has a 2X digital zoom as well as a built-in IR illuminator. The device has a built-in micro SD slot and a micro USB port. (beringoptics.com; 817-453-9966)





AN/PVS-14

The AN/PVS-14 is in common use by U.S. military personnel today. This monocular device can be helmet mounted for ground-based night observation tasks or fitted directly behind a collimated sight. When helmet mounted, the AN/PVS-14 serves as an image intensifier to identify close- and long-range threats. The AN/PVS-14 offers a 40-degree field of view as well as a clear central aiming point when used in conjunction with weapon sights. Night Vision Depot offers this versatile monocular system with a variety of intensifier tubes that balance performance and price. (eotechinc.com; 888-368-4656)



HARRIS AN/PSQ-20A SENVG

The Spiral Enhanced Night-Vision Goggle (SENVG) is a refined version of the AN/PSQ-20 ENVG. The SENVG is an optically fused monocular that combines both an image intensified tube with an IR microbolometer into a single compact unit.

The SENVG weighs 21 ounces and operates on three AA batteries. The field of view is 40 degrees for the image intensifier and 30 degrees for the IR sensor. The SENVG can detect a man-sized target out to 328 meters. The SENVG's non-exit-pupil-forming eyepiece allows an operator to maintain a full field of view despite inevitable helmet shifting during tactical operations. (harris.com)



HARRIS F4949

The F4949 series is the standard night flying system for the aircrews of the U.S. Air Force and Navy. These state-of-the-art dual-tube image intensifiers are optimized to maximize depth perception and clarity for tasks like blacked-out driving and night flying. The F4949 fits a variety of head mounts and can be used with an optional clip-on battery pack. The external power pack contains two pairs of AA batteries so a battery failure will not compromise flight safety. The F4949 weighs a mere 19.4 ounces and allows a properly trained aviator to perform any mission in darkness. (harris.com)



FLIR MILSIGHT T90 TANS

The FLIR MilSight T90 TaNS (Tactical Night Sight) mounts ahead of your day optic and provides truly long-range engagement capabilities. Using the finest-quality mil-spec Gen 3 image intensifier tubes, the TaNS does not require boresighting and is optimized for 2X to 8X day scopes. The TaNS includes FLIR's Shock Mitigation System (SMS) that allows this rugged optic to be used on .50-caliber weapons. The TaNS runs on two AA batteries and weighs 24 ounces. Its focus range is 3 meters to infinity, and it has no intrinsic magnification. (flir.com; 800-868-0639)

FLIR SCOUT II

Unlike image intensifiers, thermal systems detect temperature gradients and display them as an image on a screen. In so doing, they make it all but impossible to hide against a relatively cool background. The FLIR Scout II is compact enough to fit easily in the palm of your hand. The Scout II has an internal lithium-ion rechargeable battery and a detection range out to 500 yards. This unit weighs 12 ounces and allows tracking, surveillance and rescue capabilities that were previously unimagined. The Scout II also finds leaky/drafty areas around household insulation, and the Pro version allows both still and video image capture capabilities. (flir.com; 800-868-0639)





FLIR THERMOSIGHT T50

The FLIR ThermoSight T50 is a clip-on external thermal imager that mounts directly to a weapon and allows thermal detection capability despite dust, fog, smoke or total darkness. The T50 is designed to operate in conjunction with sights like the Trijicon ACOG. Government users can procure the T50 with a built-in IR targeting laser. The T50 operates for nine hours on three CR123 batteries and weighs 23 ounces. This state-of-the-art device sports 2X and 4X digital zoom capabilities and proprietary STACE digital image enhancement. (flir.com; 800-868-0639)



KNIGHT VISION AN/PVS-22

The mil-spec AN/PVS-22 is a clip-on Gen 3 image intensifier than mounts ahead of a weapon's day optics to provide enhanced night target identification and engagement capabilities. The catadiopteric lens of the AN/PVS-22 provides high performance light collection in a lightweight optic. The AN/PVS-22 is effective on M4, M249, M14 and other common military weapon systems. The AN/PVS-22 weighs 1.75 pounds and operates to 48 hours on one AA or one CR123 battery. The unit is waterproof for four hours at 3 feet and sports a 13-degree field of view. (knightarmco.com; 321-607-9900)



NVD BMNVD

One of the newest night-vision goggle designs is the Binocular/Monocular Night-Vision Device (BMNVD). The BMNVD uses modular intensifier tubes that can be configured either together or alone using a common mounting solution that is compatible with standard AN/PVS-14 accessories. Both tubes of the BMNVD draw power from a common bridge to minimize the hardware footprint. The BMNVD uses standard CR123 batteries for roughly 40 hours of continuous use. The BMNVD is fully collimated, nitrogen-purged and lightweight. (nvdepot.com; 610-395-9743)

NVD PVS-7

The AN/PVS-7D is the workhorse night-vision system for the U.S. military and has been produced by the tens of thousands. This versatile single-tube goggle is also widely used by foreign NATO forces. The AN/PVS-7D uses a single Gen 3 image intensifier tube for maximum performance with minimum weight and bulk, and Night Vision Depot offers a version as part of its PVS-7 Night Vision Goggles Special Forces Kit. The PVS-7 is built to withstand water immersion and runs for 40 hours on two AA batteries. It weighs 24 ounces without batteries and comes with a full 10-year warranty. (nvdepot.com; 610-395-9743)





NVD STRYKER

The Stryker is built around a high-performance Gen 2 image intensifier tube to offer professional-grade performance for the individual operator or law enforcement entity on a budget. The Stryker has a built-in IR illuminator and can be used in conjunction with optional 3X, 4X, 6X and 8X magnifiers. The Stryker runs for 40 hours on a single CR123 battery, but it can be ordered with a 12-volt jack to allow the unit to operate on vehicle power for stakeout and surveillance operations. The Stryker has a 220-yard detection range. (nvdepot.com; 610-395-9743)



NVD MICRO

The Night Vision Depot (NVD) MICRO is an ultra-small monocular image-intensified night-vision device. The MICRO can be head or helmet-mounted, handheld or affixed to a camera. The MICRO is available with commercial or mil-spec Gen 3 Pinnacle Auto Gated image intensifier tubes. Adaptors allow the MICRO to be used along with standard PVS-7 and PVS-14 mounts. The MICRO is a versatile and concealable surveillance tool. It sports a 40-degree field of view, uses a single CR123 battery and weighs a mere 11 ounces. (nvdepot.com; 610-395-9743)



POLARIS NIGHT VISION MONOCULAR

The Polaris Night Vision Monocular is a basic Gen 1 device for those on a budget. First-generation systems require an IR light source to be effective but can be remarkably inexpensive. The Polaris has a wide field of view, a 60-hour run time on a single CR123 battery, an automatic cutoff in the face of bright lights and a built-in IR illuminator. The Polaris can operate as a handheld device or as a head-mounted monocular. The Polaris will only set you back a couple hundred bucks. (nvdepot.com; 610-395-9743)

Bushnell Equinox Z Binoculars

Bushnell has been producing high-performance sporting optics for 65 years, and the company recently added two new night-vision binoculars to its Equinox Z product line. These night-observation binoculars incorporate digital image amplification technology that offers superb optical clarity and a wide field of view at a reasonable cost. The Equinox Z night-vision binoculars use common AA batteries and include digital zoom, instant image capture, video output and video recording capabilities. These devices offer target identification out to 1,000 feet with an IR illuminator.

Equinox Z units are configured within a robust water-resistant housing and employ quality multi-coated optics. These devices represent a low-cost solution for nocturnal game observation, law enforcement and home security applications. The binoculars sport adjustable IR settings and, unlike many more expensive traditional night observation devices, still retain the option of daytime color viewing as well. (bushnell.com; 800-423-3537) SW





If you don't think about it too much, constructing a knife should be simple. It's only two planes of steel meeting at an extremely acute angle. Sure, it sounds simple. But there are as many shapes and sizes of blades as there are tasks for them to perform, from the delicate work of the sharpest scalpels, to machetes that hack through jungles, to diamond blades that cut tough materials in the bowels of industrial machinery.

It's the task it will complete and the environment in which it will be used that determines how the blade will look, feel and balance, and how the edge interacts with the material it's intended to cut.

When designing a combat knife, there are a few questions to answer before the design should even begin. Will it be purely a fighting knife that won't be regularly used for any other task, like fieldcraft and basic chores, or will it be the only fixed-blade knife a warfighter carries in the field? It has to be good at two things: slashing and stabbing. Thin, viciously pointed blades are great for puncturing through gear and clothing to get to the flesh beneath, but they are usually poor slashers. A clip-point blade might have a nicer belly for slashing, which would also make it a decent field knife, especially for dressing game, but the blade's shape can leave a weak, narrow tip that isn't ideal for stabbing chores and can break.



The Nyx has proven itself with Special Forces operators serving in extreme environments.

Sharp Goddess

The Nyx combat knife from Spartan Blades does a beautiful job of balancing the capabilities of a slashing and stabbing weapon to create a truly universal combat/utility/survival knife. It's a sturdy blade of CMP S35VN steel that's 0.19 inches at it's thickest, making it plenty strong for hard batoning and carving. With a blade length of 5.13 inches and an overall length of 10 inches, it's a nimble tool that offers the perfect amount of blade.

The knife is named after the primordial goddess of night and darkness—a mean name for a mean blade, as it should be. Spartan Blades is the brainchild of two retired U.S. Army Special Forces NCOs who know firsthand what a field/combat knife needs to be. All of their products are produced in North Carolina with materials of U.S. origin, with exacting detail you would only find on the most expensive custom knives. Some of their blades are hand-ground while others are milled, meaning every knife Spartan Blades produces is touched and handled by their skilled craftsmen. These aren't big-batch assembly line knives.

The Nyx was one of the first knives Spartan designed when it was created in 2008 and was considered the field knife of the company's initial lineup. According to Curtis Iovito, a co-owner of Spartan Blades, "It is one of the three knives that Spartan made when Mark [Carey] and I started the company. The intent was to make a hybrid knife that could be used for both hunting and military tasks. It ended up being the preferred knife of many hog hunters in the Southwest, the reason being that it can dispatch a hog due to its sharp point, yet the belly of the blade works great for dressing animals."

Spartan calls the unique shape of the blade a hybrid recurve design. It's almost a leaf-shaped blade with a generous belly and no clip. The tip is aligned with the centerline of the blade and it has a lot of steel behind it, making the Nyx a strong, sharp stabbing weapon.

Often, blades with a tip like this are forced to have a straighter spine, which cuts down on the knife's slashing power. But the Nyx's full-tang blade tilts forward a few degrees at the hilt, almost like a miniature *kukri* knife, providing extra leverage for slashing motions. The handle blends seamlessly into the silhouette of the blade so you don't notice the slight angle until you need it.

Like other Spartan knives, the handle is narrow and quite thin, with rugged canvas Micarta scales. At first, the

SPARTAN WARRIOR

BY DAVID MACCAR

The Special-Forces-inspired Nyx is ready for combat!



SPECS

SPARTAN NYX	
Blade Length:	5.13 inches
Blade Thickness:	0.19 inches
OA Length:	10 inches
Weight:	7.68 ounces
Blade Steel:	CMP S35VN
Hardness:	58-59 HRC
Finish:	SpartaCoat
Handle:	Micarta
MSRP:	$330

handle may seem a bit inadequate, but after you use it for a while, the reasons behind the handle's dimensions become apparent. It offers a bit less leverage but provides excellent control and, perhaps more important for many operators of all kinds, it makes the knife easier to grab, use and hang onto while wearing gloves, thick or thin. The low-profile handle also takes up less room when the sheath is mounted on a vest or belt.

Do-It-All Knife

But a knife is not always used as a weapon, even in combat. The thick blade allows the Nyx to become a light prying tool if absolutely necessary, and a choil just above the hilt and serrations on the spine allow a user to choke up on the knife for superior control and applying force for more delicate tasks like carving or dressing game.

The blade is available with a flat black or Flat Dark Earth SpartaCoat finish, and the Micarta handle scales are available in black or green. As for a sheath, there are a couple options. The Nyx ships with a plastic and nylon MOLLE sheath with a handle retention strap with a snap. It's square and bulky, but it works well enough. You can also buy a molded Kydex sheath to match the color of the knife's handle or blade, which is a better option, as it allows for the knife to be extremely secure or readily available for a smooth, quick draw.

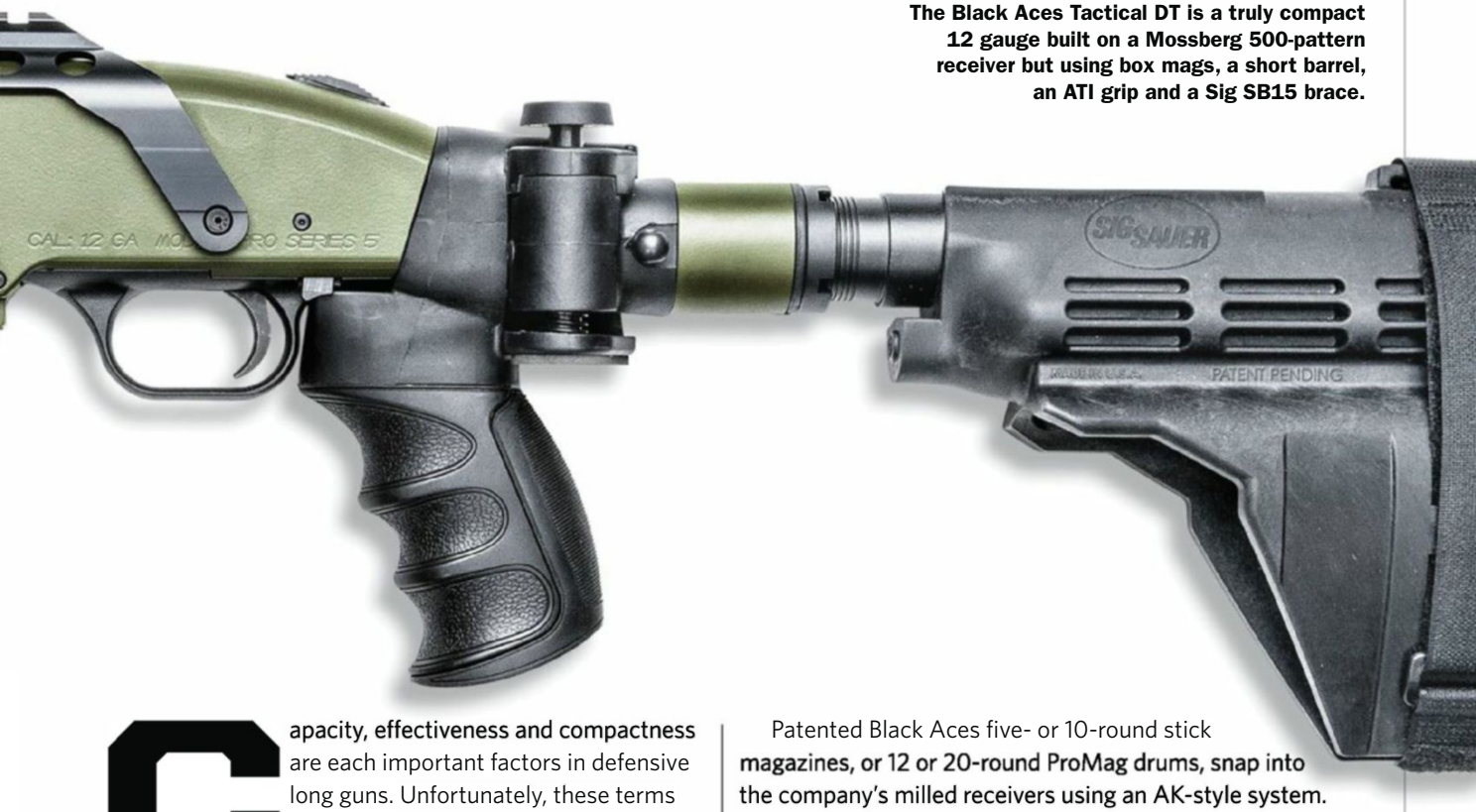
The Nyx is a combat-ready knife that won't fall short in handling the tasks you need a knife to perform in any theater, in any circumstances. For more information, visit spartanbladesusa.com or call 910-757-0035. SW



ACE OF SPACE

The ultra-compact Black Aces Tactical DT 12 gauge dominates in CQB!

BY D.K. PRIDGEN



The Black Aces Tactical DT is a truly compact 12 gauge built on a Mossberg 500-pattern receiver but using box mags, a short barrel, an ATI grip and a Sig SB15 brace.

Capacity, effectiveness and compactness are each important factors in defensive long guns. Unfortunately, these terms can conflict. In the law enforcement and military worlds, each factor can mean success or failure, but which one is most important at the time really depends on the situation.

For those maneuvering in buildings or vehicles, compactness rates pretty high, as the U.S. Marine Corp recently acknowledged while considering replacing its M16s with M4s. As for capacity, well, quick reloads are always a good thing. Not many people are taking Garands into battle today.

It seems that the best option for close quarters might be a high-capacity, magazine-fed 12 gauge with a short overall length. A short-barreled pump shotgun meets some specifications, but then there is the capacity issue. And for those not in the military, the NFA paperwork involved adds time and expense, turnoffs for many.

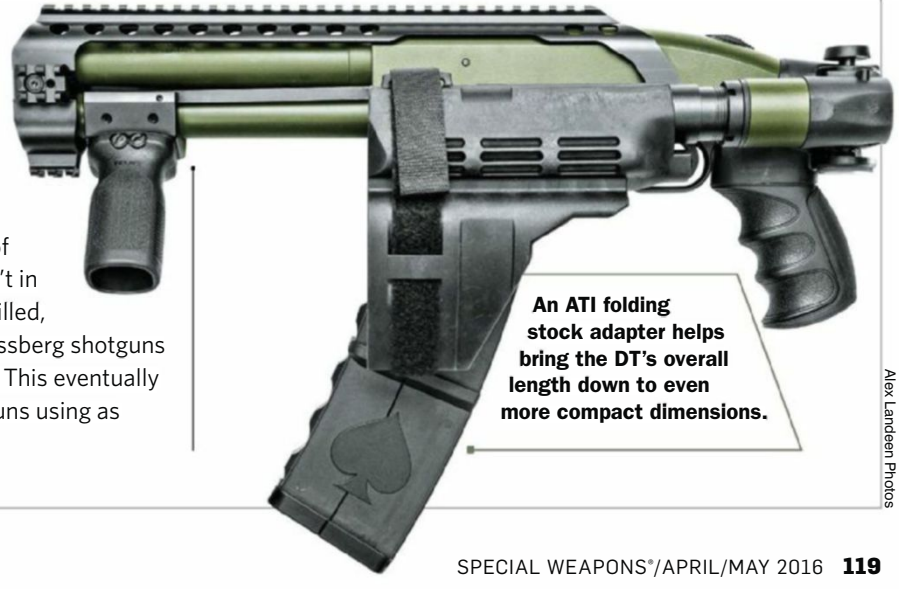
Aces High

Florida's Black Aces Tactical has been working to solve these problems. In 2009, the company began manufacturing a line of shotgun rails, but stopping there just wasn't in the cards. The Pro Series 5 was up next: milled, magazine-fed receiver conversions for Mossberg shotguns that retained the reliable Mossberg safety. This eventually led to Black Aces building complete shotguns using as many of its own parts as possible.

Patented Black Aces five- or 10-round stick magazines, or 12 or 20-round ProMag drums, snap into the company's milled receivers using an AK-style system. It was obvious to the Black Aces crew that the receiver/magazine combination could eliminate the capacity shortcomings for short-barreled shotguns, where shortened barrels meant shortened magazine tubes.

The guys at Black Aces put their thinking caps on and came up with plans to produce the Pro Series 5 DT shotgun—a compact shotgun with excellent capacity. It was a 12-gauge shotshell platform, which certainly provides effectiveness. Still, there was the pesky NFA paperwork and delays, but Black Aces had some ideas about that!

With the DT shotgun idea established and growing in popularity, Black Aces wanted to work with the BATFE to



An ATI folding stock adapter helps bring the DT's overall length down to even more compact dimensions.

Alex Landeen Photos

"...the best option for close quarters might be a high-capacity, magazine-fed 12 gauge with a short overall length."



With its Sig Sauer SB15 Stablizing Brace, the DT is extremely handy in close quarters.



Black Aces used a lot of machined steel in the DT, including the multi-positional action block (shown wearing a Magpul foregrip).

Alex Landeen Photos

evaluate the future DT to ensure that the final product could be sold, purchased and used without NFA difficulties. The milled receiver—a virgin receiver that never had a stock attached before—was one step. When the guys the guys at Black Aces finished their ministrations incorporating the advice of the BATFE's Firearms Technology Industry Services Branch, they had the DT's final specs.

Gun Details

The DT uses an 8.5-inch barrel, an Advanced Technology International (ATI) pistol grip, a fixed or folding buffer tube, a Sig Sauer SB15 stabilizing brace and a Magpul foregrip on a multi-positional action block mounted between the twin action bars.

The buffer tube is attached to the receiver with an ATI Talon fixed or folding stock adapter, which includes the ATI pistol grip. The Black Aces DT has an overall length of 26.5 inches with the tube locked open and weighs about 7 pounds empty. Black Aces also became the proud possessor of a BATFE letter declaring the DT a firearm, not an "any other weapon" (AOW) or short-barreled shotgun (SBS), meaning no NFA paperwork was required.

There were qualifications, though. The shotgun submitted to the FTISB had an overall length of 27.25 inches—definitely exceeding 26 inches, as it must. As explained by the FTISB, "a firearm of this type is properly classified as an AOW if its overall length is less than 26 inches, or if it is actually concealed on the person." Because the overall length of the DT is a product of the Sig Sauer SB15 brace, the "firearm" classification remains "provided the Sig Sauer SB15 stabilizing brace is used as originally designed and *not* used as a shoulder stock."

All of this means Black Aces can legally market the DT to users without involving any NFA paperwork. It also means the end-user is responsible for keeping the NFA fly out of the ointment by not illegally using the Sig Sauer SB15 as a shoulder stock or carrying the DT concealed. That's pretty simple.

In addition to the receiver, the barrel, action lock, barrel clamp and extractor are milled, and other small parts are purchased directly from Mossberg. The DT is hand-finished for a tight fit and smooth operation. Finally, for a custom touch, the purchaser can choose from a large number of Cerakote finish options. The result of all of Black Aces' work is three patents, with a fourth in the works.

SPECS

BLACK ACES TACTICAL DT	
Gauge:	12; 3-inch chamber
Barrel:	8.5 inches
OA Length:	26.5 inches
Weight:	7 pounds (empty)
Grip:	ATI Talon
Sights:	None
Action:	Pump
Finish:	Cerakote
Capacity:	5+1, 10+1
MSRP:	N/A

CQB Machines

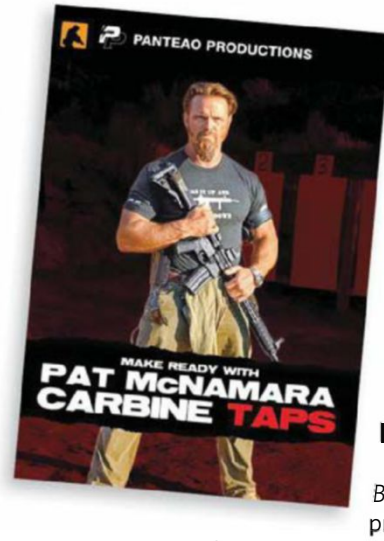
It appears that although the Black Aces DT is shooting out of its doors, there was one upgrade a large number of customers wanted to see: a rail for sights and accessories. By the time you read this, Black Aces Tactical will be selling its new Tactical DTR—the current DT but wearing one of Black Aces' RB7DT quad-rails.

Black Aces Tactical is a quality company that solves problems, listens to its customers and build innovative products. It sounds like these guys are doing everything right! For more information, visit blackacestactical.com or call 407-919-9783. SW

TIER ONE TRAINING

Panteao offers carbine and combat optic training from Pat McNamara and Freddie Blish!

BY JORGE AMSELLE



Training is important, and getting the best training from real experts takes time and money, two things most of us never seem to have in sufficient quantities. But being strapped for cash and time doesn't mean you have to miss out thanks to Panteao Productions and its full line of professional firearms training videos available on DVD or online. Panteao Productions pairs world-renowned experts and professional video production quality for the best instruction available. Two of Panteao's recent DVDs will appeal to tactical shooters in particular.

McNamara's TAPS

Make Ready with Pat McNamara: Carbine TAPS takes a lifetime of Special Forces firearms training and gives you the basics inside an hour and half. It packs in 22 years of McNamara's special operations combat experience. If you want to learn how to best run an AR, this is the man to teach you.

The Carbine TAPS (Tactical Application of Practical Shooting) video covers topics in quick succession, starting with safety basics and specific considerations for the AR, such as keeping your safety engaged anytime your rifle comes off target. McNamara covers setting up your carbine, including where to place optics and tactical lights and how to use your sling. He next delves into basic rifle marksmanship, including understanding ballistics, where to zero your sights, the importance of the trigger and breath control, and different shooting positions, including prone, kneeling, sitting and standing.

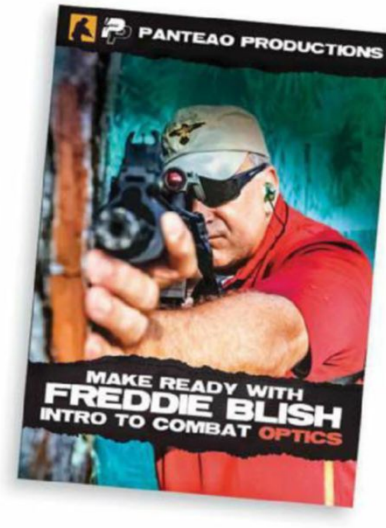
McNamara also runs through half a dozen different drills that combine magazine changes, transitions to secondary weapons, proper use of cover, movement and working in tandem. One of the most useful lessons is the section on understanding and clearing malfunctions, which clearly all comes from firsthand real-world experience. Honestly, I personally have never seen some of the malfunctions presented and would have had a hard time clearing them. That alone is worth the price of admission. Malfunctions, according to McNamara are primarily user error but can also be caused by bad ammunition, chamber obstructions, broken parts or springs, a dirty gun and unreliable magazines.

Finally, you get McNamara's personal and practical take on the theory of training like you fight. Frankly, as he explains, unless you are employed in a tactical job, you are better off spending more time training how to draw your concealed-carry pistol and engaging targets. McNamara is direct and doesn't waste any time getting to the point in providing high-quality, lifesaving instruction.

Blish's Ballistics

The second video, *Make Ready with Freddie Blish: Intro to Combat Optics*, is a truly comprehensive manual on high-end red dot and holographic sights. These sights can cost more than your rifle, and selecting the right one is important. Blish retired from the Marine Corps after 24 years as a lieutenant colonel before working for Aimpoint. In this three-hour video, Blish covers products from Aimpoint, EOTech, Trijicon, Vortex and JP Enterprises, including their military and law enforcement users and the various options available for quality mounts.

Different mounting options are discussed at length, including the importance of different risers and levels for co-witnessing. Blish also spends significant time on the range explaining the differences between 100-, 200- and 300-meter zeros and their effect on the standard-issue, 63-grain 5.56mm bullets. He demonstrates how well made these modern combat optics are, and how they hold their zero despite being repeatedly dropped, removed and installed. Finally, he explains how to handle malfunctions like a dead battery (use the sight itself as a rear sight within 25 yards) and having an occluded sight (shoot with both eyes open). Blish concludes with some rapid fire and movement drills as well as discussing the importance and viability of red-dot sights for pistols and shotguns.



No DVD can replace one-on-one training with a qualified instructor, and these are certainly not intended to do that, but they do offer excellent advice from real experts and are well worth your attention. For more information, call 800-381-9752 or visit panteao.com. SW

REDL, AIM, FIRE!

ON TARGET WITH MARK REDL AND HIS 175,000-ROUND COLT RACE GUN.

BY DOUG LARSON



The Team-Colt-sponsored competitive shooter and two-time International Defensive Pistol Association (IDPA) King of New England title holder, Mark Redl, was recently hired by Colt's Manufacturing Company as its product manager for handguns. With more than 20 state and regional shooting competition wins over his eight-year professional shooting career, four of which have been shooting for the Colt team, he brings a level of practical and product knowledge to the job, that, according to Paul Spitale, Colt's senior vice president of commercial business, "will help us usher in the next generation of Colt products."

To find out more about this competitor and now member of the Colt management team, *Special Weapons* was able to interrupt Redl's busy schedule and ask him some questions about his shooting and his equipment.

Special Weapons: How long have you been shooting?
Mark Redl: I started in 1981 when I got my permit in New York State to carry concealed firearms. I then realized that I should probably learn how to use the gun properly, so I went to shooting schools run by people like Ken Hackathorn and John Farnam. After I started learning, I looked around for a way to stay proficient, and action shooting competition was the closest thing I could find.

"...when you begin competing, don't go for the win or glory, but enjoy yourself, be safe and learn."

SW: What mindset do you need for competition shooting?
MR: You have to have a positive attitude. I look at each stage as a match, so if I do badly on one stage, I put that out of my mind and move to the next stage. I've seen many people shoot a bad stage and then have a negative attitude during every stage after that. They end up having a terrible match.

SW: How often do you practice?
MR: Like most shooters today, I have a full-time job, but I'm lucky and I'm living the dream working for Colt. I'm very busy, but I try to practice with live fire three times a week. The rest of the week, I try to get in at least 20 minutes to half an hour of dry-fire practice. I think anybody who owns a gun should dry fire to learn how to manipulate the gun safely.

SW: What is your typical practice regimen when you go to the range?
MR: After working all day, I'll pick one or two techniques like transitions or shooting on the move, and concentrate on those, shooting about 150 rounds. On weekends, I'll shoot no more than 250 to 300 rounds each day, because when you shoot more than that, you start to get fatigued and then get sloppy. Like the old saying,

"Perfect practice makes perfect," not just "practice makes perfect."

SW: What advice do you have for someone just starting out in the competitive shooting world?
MR: Most people don't practice the fundamentals enough. In every one of my training sessions, I start and end shooting groups at 25 yards. That builds the fundamentals and also confirms that my gun is sighted in for 25 yards. I also tell people to watch a couple of matches to see how they're run. Then, when you begin competing, don't go for the win or glory, but enjoy yourself, be safe and learn.

SW: Are there any real-world benefits from competing that can be applied to self-defense?
MR: Absolutely. Everybody I know who shoots competitively is usually a safer gun handler. Competition forces you to learn how to manipulate your gun. If there's a problem during a stage, you have to safely overcome it and think on your feet. It also gives you confidence that you can hit what you're shooting at.

SW: What method of trigger manipulation do you use?
MR: I was taught to keep constant contact on the trigger. Of course, it depends on how close the target is. At 5 to 10 yards, I can be real aggressive on the trigger as long as I keep the sights aligned. With a 25-yard target, you're going to slow down and press.

SW: It's been reported that you've run over 170,000 rounds through your competition gun. Is that true?
MR: It's now got 175,000 rounds through it, and those are just my practice rounds. I reload, so I keep the primer packages and know how many rounds I've shot. It's actually the first Colt gun that I was given. All of my Colt guns are taken right off the production floor and are not Custom Shop guns. I run a Combat Elite Series 80 gun, and the only things I did after I got it were clean up the trigger and put a mag well on it. Otherwise, it's a factory gun with a factory match barrel.

SW: Have you had to replace any parts on the pistol?
MR: I replaced the barrel because I shot it smooth. It had only about half an inch of rifling at the end, and I was starting to get flyers. I also replaced the firing pin because it mushroomed from all the dry firing. But it's still got the same hammer and sear that Colt put in it when it was brand new.

SW: What maintenance procedures do you practice with that gun?
MR: I'm very religious about totally disassembling the gun before any big match to inspect and clean it. I change the recoil spring every 5,000 rounds and the mainspring every 10,000 rounds. Every year I change the sear spring and mag release springs. SW

"Competition forces you to learn how to manipulate your gun. If there's a problem during a stage, you have to safely overcome it and think on your feet."





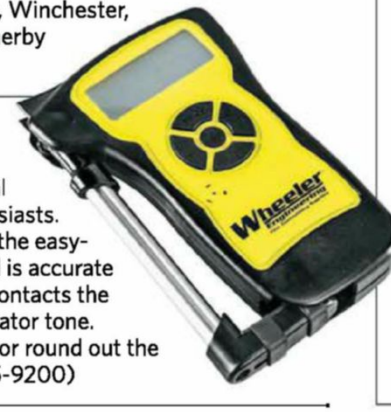
Mark Redl, the IDPA King of New England, blazes through a course with his Colt Combat Elite 1911, which has fired well over 175,000 rounds.

NEW PRODUCTS



HOGUE BED BLOCK STOCK

The Hogue Full-Length Aluminum Bed Block Stock features a molded-in, precision CNC-machined, 7075-T6 aircraft-grade aluminum block that completely surrounds the action and extends into the forend. This full-length block provides rock-solid stability over the full length of the stock and free-floats the barrel. This stock is available for Mauser, Winchester, Remington, Savage, Ruger, Howa and Weatherby rifles. (hogueinc.com; 800-438-4747)



WHEELER DIGITAL TRIGGER GAUGE

The Wheeler Engineering Professional Digital Trigger Gauge is designed for firearms enthusiasts. Featuring an ergonomic overmolded design, the easy-to-use gauge has a 0- to 12-pound range and is accurate to within 0.1 ounces. A load sensor directly contacts the trigger, and the unit features an audible indicator tone. Soft-touch buttons and a low-battery indicator round out the package. (wheelerengineering.com; 573-445-9200)



BRAVO COMPANY MK15 WATCH

The Bravo Company Manufacturing (BCM) MK15 Tritium Watch is designed to be there for you when you need it. Housed in a case made from 316L stainless steel and finished in a brushed black PVD, the MK15 is water resistant to 200 meters with Swiss-made chronograph movement. Offered as a limited edition of 2,500 timepieces, each MK15 is laser engraved with a unique serial number and deploys in a custom injection-molded, glass-fiber-reinforced case. (877-272-8626; bravocompanyusa.com)

TETRA CARBON CLEANER

New from Tetra Gun is its Carbon Cleaner solution, which is specially formulated to eliminate carbon buildup from metal surfaces on firearms. It is a water-based solution that is generally harmless to non-metal parts, including wood, rubber, polymer and composite materials. The product is also non-flammable and biodegradable. The result is a top-notch cleaning product for all your firearms needs. (tetraguncare.com)





LIBERTY LEAD-FREE .223

Liberty Ammunition's lead-free, 55-grain, .223 Remington Silverado rifle cartridge receives high marks for its accuracy, lack of overpenetration and running flawlessly with no malfunctions. The cartridge is designed to deliver flawless functioning in a wide variety of firearm types along with impressive performance on target. The result is a lead-free round that gives up nothing and brings a lot to the game. (941-567-6178; libertyammunition.com)

RUGER ARX AMMUNITION

Described by Ruger as "the next generation of self-defense technology," the new ARX line of handgun ammunition is engineered to deliver when it matters. Developed in concert with PolyCase Ammunition and employing advanced materials, the projectiles are designed for maximum hydraulic displacement and terminal energy transfer to the threat. Currently available in 9mm, .380 and .45, with .40 coming soon. (ruger.com)





RUGGED SUPPRESSORS OBSIDIAN

The new Obsidian .45 ACP suppressor from Rugged Suppressors has been described as "the industry's quietest .45 pistol suppressor." The new multi-caliber, modular pistol suppressor measures at 129.3 decibels dry with a .45 ACP pistol. Constructed of aluminum and 17-4PH stainless steel, the Obsidian also comes with Adapt Modular Technology that allows users to configure the Obsidian from a standard 8.6-inch configuration to a short 6.7-inch configuration within seconds. (ruggedsuppressors.com; 864-810-0513)

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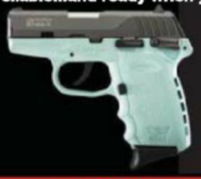
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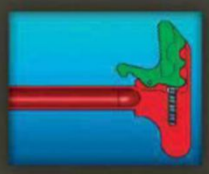
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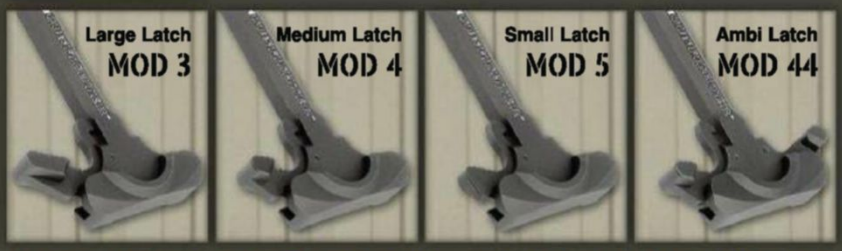


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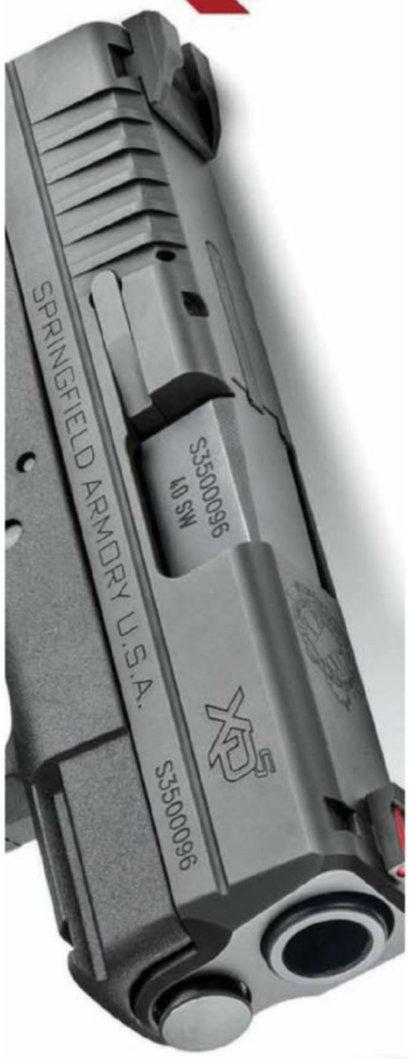
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ALEXANDER ULFBERHT

Continued from page 25

Nonetheless, the Ulfberht created some pretty impressive groups at 100 yards. My best 100-yard group measured right at 0.6 inches using Desert Tech's 300-grain SMK ammunition. This load might as well be handloaded because of its accuracy. The 300-grain Barnes OTM ammo created a best five-shot group measuring 0.75 inches. Groups at 300 yards with both loads were right at an inch. The more I used the Ulfberht, the better it dialed in, making for some very solid accuracy.

Passing The Test

The Ulfberht has a user-adjustable, five-position gas system with "zero" being off (no gas). Position one is for high-pressure ammunition and two is for general use, including most 300-grain ammunition. I mostly used the rifle with the gas system in position two, and it ran very reliably.

Like most .338 semi-autos, the Ulfberht's bolt doesn't lock back after the last round is fired. My guess is that it would be very hard on magazine followers, and it mimics a bolt rifle in application. If single-loading is required, you can simply hold the bolt open, drop in a round and run the bolt with ease.

The Ulfberht's ergonomics are excellent. It was easy to get set up properly. If extended shooting were in order, some might need a thicker recoil pad. The buttstock is very solid, as is every other aspect of this .338 Lapua Magnum rifle. The Ulfberht was built to dominate, and I imagine it would do just fine in that endeavor.

The Ulfberht is no lightweight at just under 20 pounds unloaded. Add a scope and a loaded magazine and you are pushing 25 pounds. Bill Alexander tells me this is an SR1 model. The SR2 and SR3 are in final testing. Apparently a 22-inch barrel along with some titanium and carbon-fiber components will make the SR2 a bit handier. Full-time suppression is the plan for the SR2. Given how this rifle performed, any future iteration should be impressive. If you are in the market for a serious .338 Lapua semi-auto built to last, the Ulfberht needs to be very high on your list. For more information, visit alexanderarms.com or call 540-639-8356. SW

POF-USA P308-FA

Continued from page 76

E^2 dual extraction system. We cut four shallow grooves into the neck area of the chamber to allow gas to vent around the casing's neck, breaking the seal, and exert pressure on its shoulder for push/pull extraction. Extraction is more reliable, and it increases the life of the extractor exponentially."

The P308-FA uses DeSomma's Modular Railed Receiver (MRR), an aluminum, free-floating handguard that dovetails the upper receiver's backbone and attaches with screws into steel anchors. The top of the handguard is railed, and rails can be attached where needed. One of the neat things about DeSomma's design is that it uses an aluminum heat sink as a barrel nut. Combined with the piston operating system, this keeps the bolt carrier and barrel chamber cooler than any direct-impingement gun after firing.

Lasting Legacy

POF-USA rifles are legendary for their accuracy, and the SBCSD evaluation surprised very few in this regard. Even after 35,000 rounds, the P308-FA was still producing 1.5-MOA groups at 500 yards. You can read the full SBCSD report on POF-USA's website.

Never one to let his creations grow stagnant, DeSomma is constantly fine-tuning his designs. In fact, he introduced his fourth generation of rifles. These lower receivers have ambidextrous magazine releases, bolt releases and safety selectors as well as nylon tension screws for an unsurpassed receiver fit. While I toured the factory, DeSomma also showed me an AR-style bolt-action rifle, the ReVolt, designed for hunters to use where semi-autos aren't legal. While the rest of the AR market follows in the "me too" position, DeSomma continues to lead.

While the select-fire P308-FA may be impossible for most to own, POF-USA does make a comparable semi-auto gun with a 14.5-inch barrel and a pinned muzzle device to give it the civilian-legal length of 16 inches. The SBCSD's after-action report is solid, independent evidence that POF-USA's regulated gas piston rifles will stand up to several lifetimes of hard use! For more information, visit pof-usa.com or call 623-561-9572. SW

FN SLP COMPETITION

Continued from page 101

The only loads it didn't like were cartridges less powerful than the manual suggests: birdshot loads with 1 ounce of shot at only 1,180 fps.

My normal testing protocol for firearms involves evaluating guns as they come straight from the manufacturer without any special tweaking—just a gun in its box, the same as you would get at the store when you buy one new. That preserves the validity of my tests. This shotgun appears to have come to me after some prior usage for most likely testing or a photography shoot. As a result, the plugs in the receiver (that fill the threaded holes where you can mount an optic rail) were not installed.

I discovered during testing that they do need to be installed, as this can allow a surprising amount of gas to be exhausted from the open holes, especially when firing high-brass shells in the SLP Competition. Installing these plugs closes up the openings to solve the issue. Of course, this does not at all reflect what you would find in a new-out-of-the-box SLP that would come with them installed.

Built To Win

Internally, the SLP Competition has a very simple, hearty design—we didn't clean it at all over 500 rounds, and it worked flawlessly no matter the type of ammunition we loaded, how fast we fired it, how dirty it got, or how hot the parts got with rapid fire. That's some truly awesome performance.

Externally, the matte blue anodized finish on the receiver and magazine tube extension looks great and can withstand the weather, and the synthetic furniture laughs at rain, dust and hard use. This is a shotgun you can dump into a 3-Gun barrel without worrying if you'll bend the magazine tube—it's seriously robust, protected by an aluminum sleeve and interfaces with a beefy gas port / brace that's welded to the barrel—or scratch the furniture. It's designed to be abused, as only action shooting competitions can abuse a shotgun, and launch some serious payloads quickly and accurately. And it survived our field evaluation, despite me not reading the manual before hitting the test range. That's an accomplishment for any gun. For more, visit fnhusa.com or call 703-288-3500. SW

Continued from page 103

features an integral but detachable sound suppressor. The "SD" stands for *Schalldämpfer*, which is German for "sound suppressor." According to HK, "Despite its integrated silencer element, it has the same length and shape as an unsilenced submachine gun. Unlike most conventional silenced submachine guns, it fires standard ammunition types with the same effect. The use of special subsonic ammunition is not necessary. The integrated silencer element suppresses the muzzle flash extremely effectively, as a result of which the weapon is also excellent for night operations using low-light amplifiers. No wonder the MP5SD is one of the most accurate silenced submachine guns of its type." The MP5SD is a quiet, smooth-shooting Ferrari of the subgun world.

In the late 1980s, HK answered a call from the FBI for an MP5 chambered in the Bureau's favorite new round at the time, the 10mm Auto, creating the MP5/10. This gun incorporated some differences, including a bolt-hold-open feature. The standard trigger group for the MP5/10 had the three-round burst mode. MP5/10 muzzles were threaded for a suppressor, and a lever-style magazine release located behind the magazine well was installed instead of the standard release button on the HK MP5. Almost all of these guns ended up in the hands of the FBI's elite Hostage Rescue Team (HRT). While they are no longer manufactured, HK still provides support for these weapons.

Into The Future

HK continued to evolve the MP5, and in 1999 the company released the successor to the MP5 empire: the UMP. The UMP (*Universale Maschinenpistole,* German for "Universal Machine Pistol") has been developed as a lighter and cheaper successor to the MP5, though both remain in production.

The MP5 is one of the most recognizable firearms on the planet, and it has helped HK reach the status it enjoys today. In many cases, the AR-15 now fills the space that the MP5 once held, but the classic subgun still remains. The MP5 will always be the benchmark for high-end submachine guns. For more information, visit hk-usa.com or call 706-568-1906. SW



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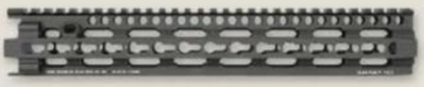
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